Class PZ7

Book B924W

Copyright No.

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

666
432

ABOVE THE ROAR OF THE WATERS THEY COULD HEAR THE SOUND OF THE AXE. — *Page 114.*

NORMAN CARVER SERIES

WITH PICKPOLE AND PEAVEY

OR

Two Live Boys on the East Branch Drive

BY

C. B. BURLEIGH

AUTHOR OF "THE CAMP ON LETTER K," "RAYMOND BENSON AT KRAMPTON," "THE KENTON PINES," "ALL AMONG THE LOGGERS"

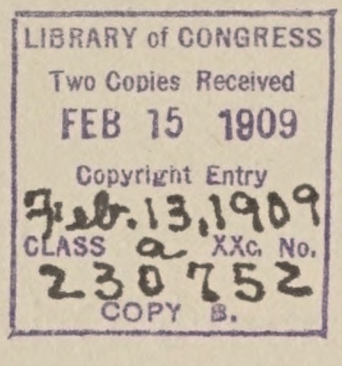
ILLUSTRATED BY H. C. EDWARDS

BOSTON

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

Published, August, 1909

PZ7
.B924W



COPYRIGHTED, 1909, BY LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

All rights reserved

WITH PICKPOLE AND PEAVEY

NORWOOD PRESS
BERWICK & SMITH CO.
NORWOOD, MASS.
U. S. A.

TO MY WIFE

WHOSE INTEREST HAS INSPIRED THE WORK

THIS BOOK

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

PREFACE

In "All Among the Loggers," the first volume of this series, an effort was made to give an accurate picture of the life in a Maine logging-camp among the hardy men who engage in the primary work of converting the vast resources of the forest to the uses of civilization.

Where the logger completes his work, the labors of the river-driver begin. The logger has cut down the towering trees, and converted them into "saw-logs." He has piled them up in huge heaps, known as "landings," along the shores of the waters upon which they are to be floated to the big sawmills where whirring rotaries convert them into the long and short lumber of commerce. The task of rolling these logs into the water — known as "breaking in" the landings — and floating them upon the full flood of the spring freshets to the sawmills many miles away, is the special province of the river-driver. It is needless to say that his calling is a hazardous one, demanding in full measure the highest qualities of physical endurance, skill, and daring. To give some conception of the life he lives and the dangers he encounters, is the purpose of the following pages. In them the reader will meet again, amid new scenes and associations, some of the more prominent characters who figured in "All Among the Loggers," including Norman Carver, Fred Warner, Billy Eustace, Sol Soc, Jud Skinner, Pete Bedotte, and Felix Lamarre.

If any of my friends among the Maine land owners and operators feel that I have been somewhat free in my treat-

ment of historical facts and incidents, I must beg them to remember that the following pages merely embody a story, and while describing accurately the physical characteristics of the wild and picturesque country which serves as its setting, using therefor the correct geographical names, no attempt has been made to observe more than general accuracy in the treating of the historical events touched upon. The details with which they have been invested are, necessarily, a part of the story.

An effort has been made to present to the reader a correct picture of the daily routine and experiences of a Maine "drive," with its incessant toil, its hardy out-of-door life, and its ever present dangers.

If the author has been fairly successful in accomplishing this purpose he will be content.

C. B. BURLEIGH.

AUGUSTA, MAINE.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	On the Sebois Tote-Road	1
II.	The Scrap at Hunt's Place	13
III.	Attempted Burning of the Sporting Camp	26
IV.	The Trip to Sebois Grand Lake	39
V.	'Poleon Caron's Windigo	52
VI.	The Capture of the Windigo	66
VII.	Norman Tries Spike-Sole Shoes	79
VIII.	On the Lower Sebois	92
IX.	Norman Breaks the Big Jam	105
X.	Through the Shadow of Death	117
XI.	An Adventure With Camp Thieves	130
XII.	Off for Chamberlain Lake	143
XIII.	A Trip Through the Lake Country	156
XIV.	The Arrival at Chamberlain Dam	169
XV.	In the Hands of the Enemy	181
XVI.	The Camp of Gusty Peters	194
XVII.	A Midnight Conference	207
XVIII.	The Escape of Norman and Fred	220
XIX.	At the Home of the Hermit	232
XX.	The Reappearance of Gusty Peters	244
XXI.	The Enemy Discomfited	256
XXII.	A Night Encounter	268

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXIII.	Gusty Peters in the Toils	281
XXIV.	The Return to Chamberlain Dam	293
XXV.	The Escape of Peters and Jasper	305
XXVI.	Back to East Branch Waters	318
XXVII.	Jake Wiley and the Bear	329
XXVIII.	A Forest Cerberus	341
XXIX.	The Night Raid on Crowley's Camp	354
XXX.	Norman and Fred Keep Vigil	366
XXXI.	Conclusion	378

ILLUSTRATIONS

Above the roar of the waters they could hear the sound of the axe (Page 114) . . . *(Frontispiece)*

FACING PAGE

The logs running well 12
At the foot of the Pitch 38
For a moment the Windigo struggled furiously but hopelessly 76
The beginning of a jam 104
Picking a big jam 116
Working out a wing jam 142
Waiting for the opening of the sluiceway at the dam 168
"Don't ye think it's a trifle hoggish not to pass 'em 'round?" 188
The tail end of the drive — the cook's batteau and supply boat 206
The supply boat running the falls 230
Peters fell with a prodigious splash 260
A "snack" at the cook's wangan 280
The rear drive clearing the shores 304
Just below Chesuncook Lake, Penobscot River 328
Ripogenus Falls, Penobscot River 340

CHAPTER I

ON THE SEBOIS TOTE-ROAD

"Going to give us the cold shake, are you?"

An amused smile lit up the grim, weather-beaten face of Billy Eustace, as he addressed this question to Norman Carver who had jumped from the lumbering tote-team, and was stretching his cramped limbs by the side of the wood-road.

"Yes, I've concluded that it's cheaper to walk," returned Norman, good-naturedly.

A boisterous shout of laughter from the men on the long buckboard that was picking its slow and tedious way over a rough forest thoroughfare, greeted this announcement. Maine loggers and river drivers dearly enjoy the tribulations of a tenderfoot.

"Ba golly! You must excuse to me," called out big Pete Bedotte, who was driving the powerful span of black horses that hauled the groaning load. "I lef' ma oatomobeel on top ma belle maison down Mad'waska."

"'N' I hev'n't quite finished the steerin' gear on my new flyin' machine," added Jud Skinner, in a tone of solemn regretfulness.

Norman smiled at these and other pleasantries of

his companions, but forbore to answer. It was the 12th day of May, clear and sunshiny. Already the woods were permeated with the steamy, aromatic odors of awakening and expanding life. There was a subtle, pervading charm in the atmosphere, and as he made his way through the deep woods in company with his light-hearted companions Norman had felt his pulses throb with the exhilaration of its influence.

He had arrived in Patten by train that afternoon, and had received a cordial welcome from Billy Eustace, Fred Warner, Felix Lamarre, Jud Skinner, Sol Soc, and big Pete Bedotte, who were already on the ground. Norman was not a little surprised to see Sol and Pete, for he had not dreamed that Harry McMurray could be induced to part with them.

"He didn't want to let me have 'em," explained Eustace, "but I made it a personal matter with him. Made him see at last that he could get along without 'em, while with me 'twas a clear case of getting the woodchuck."

There were also half a dozen new men in the party, strong, wiry fellows, wearing new big-buckled leather shoes studded heel and sole with sharp-pointed calks of wrought steel.

"Bound t' break 'em in at the fust opportunity," said Skinner, noting the curiosity with which Norman viewed this bristling foot-gear. "It's better than t' work 'em out new on th' logs. Tell ye they're great things!" he added, with enthusiasm. "Make a man a

part o' th' log he's ridin'. Couldn't do drivin' nohow without 'em."

There had been no delay after the arrival of the train in taking the long road through the woods for Sebois Grand Lake, at whose head the drive, which would later be floated down the Sebois river into the East Branch of the Penobscot, would be started. For a time the big buckboard, whose load consisted chiefly of the men it carried and their luggage, made its way over an excellent turnpike road. Riding upon it was comparatively easy, and Norman improved the opportunity to question Billy Eustace, and make the acquaintance of the new men.

"Got our supplies and batteaux into th' head o' th' lake last winter, when we could haul them on the snow," confided the boss. "I tell you I've got some rattlin' good boats up there. All of the Maynard type. Cost a little at the start, but there's no other batteau that compares with them for service to my way of thinking. I expect to work about forty men. I sent Barney O'Connor to Sebois Grand Lake yesterday with twenty-five men. He'll have the camps all ready for us when we get there, and should be well along with whatever repairs are necessary on the dam. Ah, there's a man for you," he added, with an accent of pride. "Doesn't know fear, spry as a cat; rather fight than eat, and chuck full of the Ole Scratch from one day's end to another. You can't help liking him, but it won't do to give him much rope. He's no respecter o' persons."

"Forewarned is forearmed," laughed Norman.

"Jeff Billin's's place," announced Eustace as they passed a barn-like frame house, standing in a little clearing in the woods, and whose broad piazza floor, deeply pitted with the indentations of innumerable spike-soled shoes, proclaimed its public character.

"It won't be as good going from this out," he added — a statement that was speedily verified. The road, no longer a turnpike, wound its tortuous way through a dense forest growth. It was seamed with heavy wheel ruts, and dotted with boulders over which the big buckboard bumped and slid at ever changing angles. To such an extent had the heavy tote-teams cut into the soft soil that the road, flooded at frequent intervals by the spring freshets, had the appearance of a canal, and in places its sides were two or three feet higher than its surface. It was a one-team way, and it was evident that were two teams to attempt to cross in it, the task would almost certainly be attended with difficulties. Here and there the spring freshets had made the way impassable, forcing the teamsters to swamp new ways through the woods to avoid the bogs and mire holes, or to resort to corduroy, of which the road now boasted considerably more than its fair share. Looking ahead on this road it seemed almost impossible for a team to haul any load upon it, and Norman marvelled at the skill with which big Pete Bedotte steered his wonderfully sure-footed horses around and over its obstacles. Riding soon became a torture to him, and

he would have followed Sol Soc who, disdaining a seat on the buckboard, had left the team and gone swinging out of sight up the road, had he not felt that his companions were observing him out of the corners of their eyes, and, doubtless, speculating upon his staying qualities.

At last, however, he could endure it no longer, and took to the road, as has already been related, unmindful of the laughter of the men. He was not obliged to walk alone, however, for Fred Warner was only too glad to join him, and, pushing on, they speedily left the slow-moving buckboard in the rear.

"It's a relief to get off that team," confessed Norman, as they picked their way over boulders and around stumps and mire holes. "I'm only sorry I didn't do it before."

"I knew you'd come to it," returned Warner, with a smile. "I was waiting to join you."

"Got a race o' dwarfs at t'other end o' this line," said a voice behind them. "Used t' be tall men, but got squat t'gether a-ridin' over this road."

The boys turned to meet the solemn countenance of Jud Skinner.

"Couldn't stan' it," he continued. "I've pretty nigh bitten off my tongue already a-joltin' over rocks. Them other fellows would be mighty glad to hoof it, I suspect, if they wasn't afeared o' dullin' the calks in their new shoes. Never troubled me. I can tech 'em up now 'n' then with a file, 'n' when they git past

mendin' there's new ones to be had from th' wangan."

"I wouldn't ride another three miles over this kind of a road for the best pair o' boots in the stock," declared Fred Warner.

"No more would I," acquiesced Skinner. "A feller would take a pesky sight more 'n thet out of his constitution. I remember a chap once as —"

"Here's trouble," interrupted Norman, as they came in sight of a buckboard drawn by a pair of big-framed bay horses, poor and bony from a hard winter's work in a logging-camp. The team was standing in a pool of black, muddy water at the foot of a short hill, while the driver was bearing something from a clump of alders that grew by the roadside.

"What air ye — mired?" shouted Skinner.

"No. Losum big load," responded a guttural voice, and for the first time Norman and his companion perceived that Sol Soc was standing in the shadow of some fir trees that grew half-way up the opposite slope.

At this moment the teamster made his way into the road, lugging the scratched and mud-stained form of another man in his arms. He threw his limp companion upon the load and proceeded to secure him there with a long binding rope.

"There, ye cheap yeller cur — ye dirty hog, I reckon ye'll stay there a spell," he said, grimly, when he had completed his task.

"Ben a-flyin' of his kite?" asked Skinner, affably.

For the first time the driver appeared to notice his spectators. He was a swarthy-faced man of powerful build, standing fully six feet in height, with broad shoulders and barrel chest that indicated enormous physical strength.

He turned a scowling and resentful visage upon his questioner.

"What's thet t' you?" he growled, resentfully.

"I was only askin' of ye a civil question," retorted Skinner, with spirit. "Black Jake Jasper, or I'm a liar!" he added in an undertone to Norman and Fred.

"It's none o' your bus'ness, understand that? None o' your bus'ness. I don't need any o' your help, an' I won't stan' any o' your interference. I'm capable o' handlin' my own affairs without you a-buttin' in."

Skinner, thoroughly aroused, was about to make an angry rejoinder, when a small black dog emerged from the alders, ran towards them a short distance, growling and snapping, and then, turning about, slunk back under the buckboard with drooping ears and tail between his legs — a pitiable picture of abject misery.

"He shameum dog," commented Sol Soc.

For the first time the big driver, glancing up the road, became conscious of the Indian's presence.

"An' the red calf spoke also," he commented, in a sneering tone.

"I smell a fight," muttered Skinner.

A flush of anger mantled the dark face of the Indian. A few quick strides brought him to the buckboard.

"Who callum you calf?" he demanded, with lowering brows.

"No one," responded the driver, with a harsh laugh. "It wouldn't be healthy for any one t' call *me* a calf."

"Me jus' sam'," responded the Indian, grimly.

It had evidently dawned upon Black Jake that he had stirred up trouble enough to satisfy, temporarily at least, the wildest cravings of his quarrelsome spirit. He was a man who knew not the weakness of physical fear, but he recognized in the Indian a man of great strength, who would certainly prove a formidable antagonist. For a moment the two men watched each other warily, Black Jake standing upon his load with his reins in his hands.

"G'lang," shouted Skinner, sharply.

The horses jumped quickly forward. The wheels of the buckboard struck sharply against a big boulder as they emerged from the mire hole, and Black Jake, taken completely by surprise, reeled for a moment upon his uncertain footing and pitched heavily to the ground. In a flash the Indian was upon him like a tiger. The two men struggled like giants upon the edge of the mire hole, first one and then the other seeming to have the advantage.

"I makum you eat dem calf," grunted the Indian, savagely.

"Ye coward!" gasped Black Jake, breathing hard. "Ye took me foul. I'll have yer heart, yer red heathen."

The little dog came snarling from beneath the buckboard, but Fred Warner seized him by his collar and led him, whimpering, back to his place of refuge.

Black Jake wrenched an arm free from the grasp of the Indian, snatched a sheath knife from his belt and attempted to use it upon his antagonist; but Norman seized the uplifted arm with both hands, and, with the assistance of Skinner and Fred Warner, succeeded in securing possession of the weapon. As they did so the Indian came astride of his fallen foe with a grunt of triumph, and grasped him by the throat with an iron grip. The fight was quickly choked out of Black Jake and when the Indian, at Norman's earnest request, finally released his hold upon him he lay weak and gasping upon the ground.

"Purty nigh put 'im through th' Hullin' Machine thet time — th' yeller-eyed goat," commented Skinner, exultantly.

The Indian, with folded arms, stood looking down upon his victim.

A moment later Black Jake rose unsteadily to his feet, and glared upon them with bloodshot eyes. His face was scratched and bleeding, his clothes were covered with mud, and he was not an edifying spectacle.

"Four agin one!" he panted, wrathfully. "Oh, what a nervy gang!"

"Perhaps ye've found out thet common decency pays in th' long run, 'n' sometimes 'n th' short one," retorted Skinner, sharply.

"Not from you — ye brindle cur," yelled Black Jake, and bending quickly forward he hit Skinner a swinging blow on the chin that sent him spinning into the bushes. Black Jake would have followed him up and punished him further had not the others pulled him back.

A yell of rage and pain came from the big teamster a moment later, as Skinner, foaming with rage, shot a spike-soled shoe from the bushes and sunk its steel calks in his leg. Norman hastily stepped between Black Jake and his new antagonist.

"Hold on, Skinner," he cried, in genuine alarm. "This has gone too far. Let up."

At this moment Pete Bedotte's team came in sight over the brow of the hill, and there was the scraping of steel calks against the rocks in the roadway as the members of the crew, unable to wait the slow motions of the horses, and unmindful of their new driving shoes, came tearing down the hill in the wake of Billy Eustace.

"What's up? What's the trouble here?" demanded the boss, sharply, as he caught sight of Black Jake.

"He and Sol have been a-scrappin'," explained Fred Warner. "There were words between them, and then they clinched."

"He tried to stab Sol," added Norman, "but we got his knife away from him."

"He gin me a dirty clip when I wasn't expectin' of it," declared Skinner.

"And you spiked him?" questioned Eustace, with a gleam of comprehension.

"Thet's what I did— th' skunk," returned Skinner.

"Sometime I'll get hold o' you when ye haven't yer body guard with yer, and wring yer wuthless neck," threatened Black Jake, his coarse features convulsed with passion.

"No, ye won't," retorted Skinner, warmly. "If ye ever attempt t' lay a finger on me agin, I'll fill ye so full o' lead that ye'll be good for nothin' but an anchor. I will, jest as sure's ye're born."

"Hold on! Go slow here. Go slow, I say," interposed Eustace. "I guess that when you think it over a spell neither one of you'll want t' spend the rest of your lives at Thomaston. It's a good enough town on the outside; but that isn't the part that you'll see if you go t' carrying out those kind of threats. What's the trouble with you, anyhow?" he demanded of Black Jake.

"Nothin'," was the sullen rejoinder. "I was a-mindin' my own business, an' takin' care o' my own troubles, when these fellers came along an' began buttin' in on matters that didn't consarn 'em. I wouldn't stan' for it, thet's all."

"An' so ye proceeded to insult us," added Skinner.

"Who is that man on your team?" asked Eustace, ignoring Skinner's remark.

"My brother."

"Drunk?"

"Hesn't drawn a sober breath for a week 'n' is drunkest now thet he's ben at all. He's fallen off the buckboard three times sence we left Patten; but I reckon he'll stay where he is a spell if thet bindin' rope holds tough."

"Wasn't feelin' any too pleasant," suggested Eustace.

"No, I wasn't," admitted Black Jake. "I wanted t' be let alone."

"Do you want to go on ahead?"

"No. There's a cut around on top this next pitch. I'll turn out there 'n' let ye by. All I want is the road."

"Well, you can have it an' welcome," said Eustace. "We hadn't any notion of taking it with us. Go ahead."

Black Jake started his team, and drove up the slope ahead of him which was known in that country, in common with other small hills, as a "pitch." A little later he stopped his team and permitted Pete Bedotte and his party to pass him where a "cut around" in the woods made it possible to do so.

A look of bitter hatred glowed in the deep-set eyes of Black Jake, and it was evident that he would not soon forget or forgive the rough usage he had received.

THE LOGS RUNNING WELL. — *Page 12.*

CHAPTER II

THE SCRAP AT HUNT'S PLACE

"Ma gosh! I t'ink dat ban wan ver', ver' bad man," commented Felix Lamarre, when Black Jake and his team were no longer in sight. "I ban scare he keel som' wan. I shut ma eye. I close ma ear."

"Th' scrap was all over afore ye got there," said Skinner. "I was jest a-puttin' my trade mark on 'im when ye hove in sight."

The party was once more assembled on the buckboard to discuss the unexpected encounter with Black Jake. Even Sol Soc was with them, for, taciturn as the Indian was by nature, he loved dearly to listen to the conversation of his companions when any topic of interest was under discussion.

"I'm mighty sorry I didn't hev' a chance t' git at least one swing on 'im. I hevn't ben in a rale good scrap for more'n a month," remarked Long Tom Boggs, one of the new men. "I allus was an unlucky critter," he added, regretfully.

"An' you have dem nice, beeg, long arm," said Pete Bedotte, admiringly. "Ba Joe! I t'ink mebbe you reach you de room across an' pull wan ear r-rat out som' wan's face."

"I might try it jest once, I reckon, if I hed a good chance," returned Long Tom, modestly.

"Shouldn't wonder a mite if you got it, sooner than you expected," said Eustace, gloomily. "I didn't want any scrapping on this trip, but it looks 's if we were in for it. Black Jake is an Allegash man — one of Gusty Peters's gang. I shouldn't be surprised if we found some more of them when we hang up for the night at Larry Hunt's place."

"Ba cripe! I hope dat ban so," said Pete Bedotte, with enthusiasm.

The very possibility of a scrap seemed to put the members of the crew into a good-natured frame of mind, and led to a bewildering interchange of fighting lore. Norman learned how "Spike" Melligan got a twist on "Turkey-head" Gates, and broke his arm when it looked as if "Turkey-head" had him whipped; how "Stub" Lee — "stronger'n a moose" — got a back "holt" on tall "Stoop" Duby and threw him clean over the big Franklin stove in the office of the Sunkhaze tavern; how little "Sim" Holden — "quicker'n a weasel" — held off a whole gang of Sullivan's men, when they insisted on putting him out of the dance at Ripogenus Chutes for accidentally treading on the toes of his partner — big Sal Murry — with his spike-sole shoes, a mishap which they all knew of course to be entirely unintentional, and liable to happen to any "gent." How Sim on that historic occasion stood on his left leg, and, extending the sole of his right foot,

danced around so rapidly that "th' whole blame circle seemed one continuous bristle of steel calks; couldn't one of Sullivan's men get a chance to break through," and so had to let Sim stay and participate in the festivities — these and many other episodes, some of them historical, and others breathing an atmosphere of fiction, whiled away the remainder of the afternoon's journey.

The shadows were beginning to lengthen when they finally reached the top of a high horseback. Pete stopped a moment to give his horses a breathing spell, and Norman improved the opportunity to enjoy the superb view afforded from the elevation, which enabled them to look down on the tops of majestic trees that lifted their tall crests on either side from the rich soil of the valleys.

"We're nearly to Hunt's place," announced Eustace, as the buckboard pitched down the further side of the horseback.

A moment later they crossed a good-sized stream on a log bridge, above which was a dam and a chute — also built of logs— that were evidently used for driving purposes.

"De Sebois reever," announced Pete, waving his hand down the stream, whose waters, swollen to freshet pitch, ran full from bank to bank.

A moment later, having climbed a short, steep hill, they drew up in front of a large building made of hewn logs. There was a long piazza running along

the entire front and across one end. The floors of this and of the big office room which opened off from it, were deeply pitted and slivered from the impact of spike-soled shoes. The place had evidently been more or less of a resort for the log drivers who worked along the river. Rude plank benches extended around the office against the walls. In the center of the big room was a large Franklin stove in which a brisk fire was burning. The "desk" — made of unpainted boards — was near the partition in the back of the office through which a door led to the big dining-room. On the rear side of the office, a rough board stairway led to the loft above, where two long rows of double-decked bunks — one on either side of the great room, furnished sleeping accommodations for eighty men, and had oftentimes, Eustace stated, to be supplemented by beds upon the floor when the demands of the "season" made Hunt's place one of the busiest hostelries on the road.

"He catches most of the toting business, both for the logging-camps and the drives," explained the boss. "Puts up men here from both the East Branch and the Allegash drives — sort of a half-way place. Some of 'em here now," he added in a lower tone, with a glance at half a dozen rugged-looking men in driver's garb, who, seated upon the office benches, were silently smoking their strong black pipes, and filling the room with the reek of many brands of tobacco.

It was evident that they were studying the new-

comers with interest, and reserving their judgments.

Big Larry Hunt, smiling and affable, stood behind his wide counter and extended a hearty welcome to Eustace and his men.

"Glad to see you, Billy! Glad to see you, boys!" he exclaimed cordially. "Was looking for you. Barney O'Connor and his boys were here last night. They said you were coming."

"Who have you got here?" asked Eustace, with a nod over his shoulder at the men on the benches.

"Allegash men. Some of Gusty Peters's crew," responded Hunt. "I'm goin' to let you have one o' the small log sporting camps across the road, Billy. No one's using 'em now. There's a couple of good spring beds in there, big enough for four, and you can take in any one you want to."

"I'm glad to get it," said Eustace. "Guess you and Fred and Felix better plan to come in with me," he added to Norman Carver, who stood near him.

Norman hastened to inform Fred and Felix, who were standing by the big stove, of this arrangement, with which both of them expressed their satisfaction.

As Eustace turned to resume his conversation with Hunt, the door opened to admit a powerfully built man, whose huge bulk seemed to fill the entire room.

"Gusty Peters!" announced Skinner in an undertone to the group about the stove. "There's likely t' be suthin' doin' when he's round."

The newcomer was a man fully as tall as Black

Jake Jasper, whom he probably exceeded in weight by fully fifty pounds. His features were big, and red, and coarse. An exceptionally large and bulbous nose formed their most striking characteristic. His dark eyes, small and round, looked out from under a beetling brow that was surmounted by a tangled shock of brick-red hair. His feet and hands were abnormally large, the latter when closed resembling a pair of hams.

"How'dy, Billy," he exclaimed, catching sight of Eustace.

His voice, a heavy bass, seemed to roll up from his toes like a peal of thunder, and Felix Lamarre, who saw him then for the first time, always asserted thereafter that he distinctly felt it shake the foundations of the camp.

"How'dy, Gusty," responded Eustace, shaking the proffered hand of the big Allegash boss. "Thought you were up on Eagle Lake."

"Not yet. I expect t' be there day-after-to-morrow night though."

"How's it lookin'?"

"Not over good. There's so little snow in the woods thet it looks to me like a hunt for water, long afore we reach th' St. John river. We'd be all right if we had what th' Lord intended we should."

"That's an old story, Gusty," returned Eustace, good-naturedly. "All happened before you and I were born. You Allegash people always have water, in spite of your failure to build proper storage basins.

Look at all the dams the Penobscot East Branch Driving Company has built. Save every drop we can. Still if it wasn't for the Chamberlain and Telos lake water we couldn't count on flow enough to drive pick-poles."

"Bosh, bosh, bosh!" retorted Peters, impatiently. "I've listened to thet tale o' woe afore. Fact is, Natur gin them waters t' the Allegash. The East Branch fellers stole 'em 'n' hev' used 'em for the past sixty years, but thet doesn't give 'em any right to 'em — no, sir, not by a long chalk. There's a day o' reckonin' comin', sure's ye born."

"Possibly," responded Eustace, lightly, "but thet doesn't specially concern me. I'm not a stockholder in the log-driving company."

"Sure not; but you're a-handlin' of its interests, ain't ye?"

"Yes, on Sebois waters, and while I'm in charge of them I intend to see thet they're taken care of."

"Ye do — do ye?" sneered Peters.

"That's what I do," responded Eustace, firmly. "That's what I'm here for."

The jaws of the wiry Sebois boss came together like a trap, and there was a gleam of resentment in his gray eyes. In this mood Eustace was not a man to be trifled with.

Peters was about to make a sharp reply, but was shut off by the call to supper, to which all the men in the office responded with alacrity. The Allegash

boss, himself an enormous eater, knew the imperative nature of a woods appetite, and promptly followed his men. It had never been the practice of Gusty Peters to relieve himself of any valuable opinions in the absence of an audience.

The two crews sat at separate tables on opposite sides of the room, and, as the Sebois men ate their suppers, they heard the loud, dominating voice of Gusty Peters telling his men how "them East Branch fellers" had stolen the waters of the Chamberlain and Telos lakes and diverted them into the East Branch. He forgot to state that this had happened sixty years before, and his ignorant followers, evidently looking upon it as a recent occurrence, denounced such conduct in most vigorous terms and with many oaths, of which they appeared to have an astounding assortment.

"You'd 'a' s'posed th' hogs would 'a' ben satisfied with thet," roared Peters, "but they wasn't. What did they do next, but build a tramway between Eagle and Chamberlain lakes, and make up another drive out o' logs grown in Allegash territory. Jest think of the nerve of it."

While it was evident that the men in either crew had but an imperfect conception of what Peters was talking about, it was apparent that there was some bone of contention, some long standing difference, between the operators on the East Branch, and those on the Allegash.

When the members of the two crews made their

way into the big office at the close of the meal, it was evident that there was a feeling of restraint between them that was little short of actual hostility, and which, on small pretext, could easily be made the excuse for a fight.

There was a general filling of pipes among the smokers. The men sat upon the plank benches, the Sebois crew upon one side of the office and the Allegash crew upon the other, and eyed each other furtively. There was evidently a mental sizing up of forces.

Presently the outside door opened and Black Jake Jasper limped into the room, pushing before him the man he had hauled upon his load. The toper glanced with bleary, uncertain eyes about the room, and sank upon one of the benches near the door, where he was speedily lost in drunken slumber.

The members of Peters's crew greeted the big teamster with rough but hearty cordiality.

"Hurt?" demanded Gusty, laconically.

"Yes," was the surly response.

"How?" persisted Peters.

"I've been done up," explained Jake, in a voice hoarse with passion. "Four agin one — the cowards! Thet feller spiked me while the others was a-holdin' of me," he added, pointing an accusing finger at Skinner.

"Didn't hit me a sneakin' crack an' knock me into th' bushes, did ye?" retorted Skinner, hotly.

Gusty Peters turned a glowering face upon the men of Eustace's crew.

"This 'ere needs lookin' into," he thundered. "By th' Jim Hill, I won't allow ary one o' my men t' be picked upon by a flock of buzzards!"

There was an ominous putting away of pipes on both sides of the room. The Allegash men gathered silently about Gusty Peters.

"Get against the wall," said Eustace, in a low voice. "That fellow has been aching for trouble, and I reckon he's going to get it."

In a moment the plank bench upon which the Sebois men had been sitting was pushed into the room, and Eustace and his men were standing closely together behind it, with their backs against the log wall.

"Let out them two kids," roared Gusty Peters. "We don't scrap with th' cradle."

"Perhaps you'd better get out, boys," said Eustace. "I reckon we can take care of ourselves without you, and the fur is likely to fly here for a spell."

"There's agoin' t' be a hot time in th' old town," declared Long Tom Boggs, cheerfuly.

"I'll stay right here," declared Norman, indignantly.

"And so will I," said Fred Warner.

"All right, kids. Ye've hed yer chance," growled Peters. "Now thet's th' fust man we want," he thundered, pointing a big hand at Jud Skinner. "I know all about th' cuss. Allus a-stirrin' up trouble when he thinks things air his way. We got ye now where ye can't run."

"Blow yer bugle, ole windbag," retorted Skinner,

insolently. "I reckon I'm man enough for the likes of you."

"Rush 'em! Rush 'em!" roared Peters. "Put th' Allegash brand on thet 'ere gobbie."

There was a rush across the floor, followed by a quick stop. Behind the long bench in front of the Sebois men gleamed a bristling row of spike-soles. Only two or three of the Allegash men were provided as yet with the foot-gear of the drive. There was an abrupt pause, while the besiegers warily considered the situation.

"Jus' you com' rat on. Mebbe you t'ink you mak' us scare," roared big Pete Bedotte. "I smash me dat beeg nose on yo' face."

"No, you won't," declared Long Tom Boggs, coolly. "Thet's th' plum I'm layin' out t' pick."

"Work for the ends," shouted Peters. "You fellers with th' spike-soles keep the ones in the center busy. We'll pick this 'ere jam in jest about two seconds."

He attempted to work in on Skinner, who was between Bedotte and Boggs, but was held back by the bristling spikes in Long Tom's right shoe.

"Come on, ole punkin face," challenged the tall driver, with exasperating coolness.

Peters, having, as he felt, maneuvered into position, made a quick side-smash at Boggs' ankle with his ponderous fist. It was a blow that might easily have broken it had it landed; but Boggs was no novice. Quickly dropping his foot he shot out a clinched fist at

the end of a long arm, and gave Peters a terrific blow on the end of his big nose. It was a lightning clip and took the giant boss completely by surprise. He wheeled half round, and a spurt of blood ran down his face. Before he could recover himself the tall Yankee got in two other stinging blows that made him stagger.

At this point Pete Bedotte, who had just slapped one of the Allegash men to the floor as if he had been a mosquito, pressed forward and hit the wavering Peters a heavy swinging blow beneath the ear. The big boss fell unconscious to the floor. Skinner dashed forward and would have leaped upon him with his spike-soled shoes; but Long Tom held him back.

"Play fair, partner," he said, sharply.

"I reckon thet's good advice," admitted Skinner, sheepishly. "I allus lose my head in a scrap."

The disabling of Gusty Peters was a wet blanket to the courage of his men. They still struggled on, but their resistance was brief. Pete Bedotte and Sol Soc got behind their line, and took them in the rear with swinging fists, while the rest of the Sebois men pressed them sharply on their front. The scrap was soon ended. The few Allegash men who were still in fighting condition, were hemmed in by a circle of wicked looking spike-soles, and begged lustily for quarter. It was some minutes before Gusty Peters recovered consciousness; but he was too dazed and dopy to make any further attempt at trouble, and soon

stole away to bed, where he was speedily followed by the men of his crew.

"Did you get any reminders?" asked Eustace anxiously of Norman when the fight was over.

"Not a scar," was the laughing rejoinder. "Hostilities were so soon over that I really didn't have time to get into them."

"And the rest of the boys appear to have come out in good shape," continued Eustace, in a tone of relief. "I see they've lighted up our sporting-camp," he added. "Reckon we'd better turn in."

CHAPTER III

ATTEMPTED BURNING OF THE SPORTING-CAMP

"This is something like."

Eustace, occupying the one chair in the room, spread out his hands to the fire, which roared in the small air-tight stove in the corner of the little one-room sporting-camp, and thus expressed his satisfaction with their new quarters.

"No extra space to heat," was the laughing response of Fred Warner, who, with Norman Carver, was seated on one of the two beds that occupied the little camp, and which so nearly filled it that only an eighteen-inch space was left between them.

"Ba gum! I bat yo' feefty cent it ban long tam 'fore we get 'noder chance for sleep on nice spreeng bed," declared Felix Lamarre, who sat facing them on the opposite bed.

"I think you are perfectly safe in risking your money there, Felix," responded Eustace. "Larry fixed this up for the nabobs. We fellows can play we're sports to-night, but after that it will be fir feathers for the whole of us for some time to come."

"We're lucky to be able to sleep anywhere, after that set-to," declared Fred Warner.

"Right you are, Fred," assented Eustace. "I didn't expect we'd come out so easily; but Gusty was the life of that gang, and when he was knocked out they wilted and quit. I'm thinking we drew a prize package when we got hold of Long Tom Boggs."

"Monjee! I rader keek me wit' a mule, dan have heem whack hees knockle on top ma nose," declared Felix. "Still, good t'ing for dem. Dey keek de row; dey get de leeckin'."

"We'll certainly have to put Long Tom in the class with Pete Bedotte and Sol Soc," declared Fred.

"It's a great trio," admitted Eustace, with an accent of pride.

"What I've been trying to figure out is the cause of the trouble," said Norman. "I gathered from what passed between you and Peters that there was some trouble about the division of the waters between the East Branch and the Allegash operators."

"It's an old story," said Eustace, reflectively, "but one that keeps bobbing up every now and then, like a bad shilling, when you least expect it to. It's true, as Gusty Peters said, that sixty years ago the waters of the Chamberlain and Telos lakes ran north into the Allegash river, a tributary of the St. John river. It therefore made the great timber preserves of that section dependent upon the Canadian province of New Brunswick for a market. The sawmills on the waters flowing into the St. John river were located at that time in the city of St. John. The Bangor and Aroos-

took railroad was only a dream of the future then, and St. John, with its excellent harbor, was the only place on those waters that afforded facilities for transporting manufactured lumber to market. Its favorable location made it a city of sawmills, whose annual lumber output ran well up into the hundreds of millions."

"Gass eet had hees hands on top 'mos' eve'yt'ing," commented Felix.

"That's what it did," assented Eustace, "and if the Canadian government had been wise, things might be the same now. It wasn't satisfied, however, with getting all this Maine timber. It wanted some cash along with it; so it proceeded to put a good stiff tax on all logs driven on the St. John waters."

"I should think that would have made the Maine operators hot," said Fred Warner.

"They were certainly a mad lot," acquiesced Eustace. "About that time a man named Swanson was operating around the head of Webster Lake. One of his roads ran across the southeast end of Telos Lake into Webster Lake, a distance of about a mile. There came some heavy rains that winter 'long the last of March and put the whole country afloat. Swanson noticed that water from Telos Lake was running down this piece of road into Webster Lake. That set him to thinking. It was evident that the waters of both Chamberlain and Telos Lakes were on the height of Maine's lake country — being in fact some 1100 feet above the level of the sea — and that it was about as

easy for those waters to flow south as it was for them to flow north. These two bodies of water are connected by a wide, sluggish thoroughfare about three miles long which widens out near the center into a pond about a mile long, called Telosmis Lake."

"There are no ponds in that county, I take it," said Norman.

"Hundreds of them," responded Eustace; "but they have to be pretty small to escape figuring on the map as lakes."

"W'at M'sieu Swanson heem do?" demanded Felix, impatient at the interruption.

"Why, he quietly told some of the Maine operators what he had discovered, and the next winter they got a charter to build a dam at the outlet of Chamberlain Lake. Feeling was running high against the Bluenoses then, and the lawmakers at Augusta were ready to give our Maine operators 'most anything they wanted."

Norman looked puzzled.

"The Bluenoses?" he questioned.

"Yes. That's what we Maine people call people from over the Canada line," explained Eustace.

"When did they build the dam?" asked Fred Warner.

"The very next summer. While it was going up, a crew of men shovelled out Swanson's old road. It didn't take long for the water to finish up the job when they put the dam to work. The current runs at a two-thirty gait through the canal."

"The change must have helped the East Branch people a great deal," suggested Norman.

"It would be hard to estimate how much it did for them," responded Eustace. "It not only gave them control of the growth in a splendid timber section; but it also gave them all the waters of Chamberlain Lake and its tributaries to help them out with their drives."

"De Canada fellaires dey keel dem dat hen w'at lay heem de gold goose egg," remarked Felix.

"Sure," assented Eustace. "Twisted her head right off."

"I thought Peters said something about the East Branch people not being satisfied with all that; about their going after the lumber on the Eagle Lake waters," said Norman.

"He did," responded Eustace. "You see the distance between Eagle and Chamberlain lakes is very short. So the East Branch operators have built a tramway about three-quarters of a mile long, over which they can haul logs from Eagle Lake into the waters of Chamberlain, and so float them to market down the East Branch of the Penobscot. By aid of this tramway the operators are enabled to get together a late drive of pretty good dimensions."

"The Allegash men don't appear to be reconciled," said Norman.

"Guess you'd think they were not," responded Eustace, "if you got Harry McMurray woke up on that subject once. He's never worked anywhere except on

St. John waters, while I have had more or less experience on the Penobscot waters as well. I've heard both sides. No doubt Nature gave the waters of the Chamberlain Lake and its tributaries to the St. John, but having lost them more than sixty years ago, by their own grasping, it seems to me a little far-fetched for the people on these waters to make any complaint at this late day."

"Haven't they tried to change it?" demanded Fred Warner.

"Yes. They had the whole matter up before the Supreme Court of Maine, once," responded Eustace, "but the court sustained the State charter on which the Chamberlain Lake dam was built. That settled it, so far at least as the legal question was concerned; but the Allegash men have never been satisfied, and claim that the question was not one to be finally settled by the Supreme Court of Maine inasmuch as the diverting of these waters was a violation of the Ashburton treaty. They growl about it a good deal — especially when a dry season makes driving a trifle hard. I'm free to say, however, that in my judgment the St. John's system can spare th' Chamberlain Lake waters to-day a great deal better than the Penobscot system could. In fact it would be mighty slow driving on the East Branch without them. Sleepy?" he added, as he caught Felix in the act of stifling a yawn.

"Leetle bit," admitted the Frenchman.

"Well, I guess we'd better turn in."

A few minutes later the lights were blown out, and the occupants of the little camp were soon fast asleep.

It was in the early hours of the morning that Norman awoke with a choking sense of suffocation to find the camp filled with smoke. With a shout he roused his companions, and all made their way, dazed and coughing, out of doors.

"Reckon that stove pipe's down," gasped Eustace, as soon as he could command his voice.

"No, it's here behind the camp," shouted Fred Warner, who had stepped from the end of the little piazza on a tour of investigation.

Following his lead, the members of the party found a brisk brush fire blazing against the rear wall of the little camp and lighting up the clearing with its glare.

"Quick!" shouted Eustace, taking in the situation at a glance. "Get some of those poles from the woodpile and sweep back that brush from the camp wall. Move lively, boys!"

Norman, Fred, and Felix hastened to obey this order and in a short time were busily at work pulling and pushing the blazing brush away from the little camp. Meanwhile Eustace, securing an axe from the woodpile, hastened to cut some heavy fir boughs from a near-by tree.

"Take these and we'll beat it out," he shouted, distributing them among his companions. "You've got it well scattered and I think we can get the best of it."

At this moment a big shepherd dog belonging to Larry Hunt came bounding across the road, and, seeing the blaze, lifted up his voice in a series of frantic barks.

This had an immediate effect. The men at the big camp speedily put in an appearance, in the half-dressed condition in which they had retired for the night. Some cut boughs and joined in beating out the flames, while others, securing pails, hastened to the river for water. In this good work the Allegash men joined heartily with the members of Eustace's crew. If there was any feeling of resentment remaining from the scrap of the previous evening it was certainly not in evidence, and both crews fraternized heartily in the work of saving Larry Hunt's property. Even Gusty Peters, having slept off the effects of battle, performed prodigies in the work of beating out the fire with a small fir tree which he cut for the purpose. In a short time the fire was extinguished, and the men of both crews returned to the big camp across the road in the best of spirits, and, to all appearances, in the best of fellowship. Only Larry Hunt lingered behind with Eustace and his companions.

"Whew! A mighty close call that," he exclaimed, wiping the great beads of perspiration from his face with his handkerchief. "If that fire had got a little more of a headway, I see where I'd been minus a camp."

"It was fairly lively work while it lasted," coincided Eustace.

"It's hard to explain," continued Hunt. "I knew there was a brush heap back here — meant to have cleared it away long ago; but I had no idea that it was within twenty feet of the camp."

"We're very attractive fellows," returned Eustace, lightly. "'Most everything comes our way. Our fire must have sowed its sparks pretty well over the clearing."

"I'm not satisfied with the looks of this thing, and I don't believe you are," exclaimed Hunt, with conviction.

"It doesn't pay to make much talk about things you can't prove," rejoined Eustace.

"You think that fire was set, do you?"

"I haven't any doubt of it."

"Saprè! I was t'ink I hear som't'ing back dem camp, in de night!" exclaimed Felix, with a sudden burst of inspiration. "I gass it ban wan leetle rabbit. I close me ma eye. I go on sleep."

"I guess you heard a two-legged rabbit piling that brush against the camp," said Eustace.

"Still the men all turned to, and helped put out the fire," declared Hunt, in an incredulous tone.

"All but one," asserted Norman.

"Who was that?"

"Black Jake Jasper."

"Sure as preachin'!" exclaimed Eustace, in a tone of conviction. "That sneak never came near us."

"Perhaps he didn't wake up," suggested Hunt.

"I guess if he was there he got his turn-out with the others when the boys found out what was going on," insisted Eustace.

"Wait here a minute. I'll ask the boys about him," said Hunt.

The camp owner turned abruptly and hurried across the road to the big camp.

"Ba tonderre! I don' lak' me for t'ink som' fellaire wan' roos' me lak' pork an' bean," said Felix, with a grimace.

"It doesn't make one feel over-comfortable, Felix," agreed Eustace. "Still there are those very kind of people in the world, and it looks as if one of 'em had been a-foul of us to-night. That brush pile never changed places without the help of hands."

"I wish we knew who did it," said Norman, indignantly.

"So do I," responded Eustace; "but I don't imagine that it will be an easy thing to find out."

It was evident that he was not a little stirred up over what had happened.

The party had barely gone back into the little camp, from which all traces of smoke were nearly gone, when the door opened to admit Larry Hunt.

"Black Jake isn't there," he announced, answering the looks of inquiry that greeted him. "What's more, none of the men remember to have seen him since supper."

"Where's his brother?" demanded Eustace.

"Up stairs in one of the bunks. Hasn't slept off his dope yet."

"Bring along your lantern, and let's take a look at the horse hovels," continued Eustace.

Lantern in hand, the camp owner led the way to the long row of shed-roofed log buildings that were used for stable purposes. These were searched carefully, section by section, resulting in the discovery of the missing Jasper, wrapped in a horse blanket, and apparently fast asleep on a pile of hay in the space between two facing rows of stalls.

"Le' me 'lone," he muttered drowsily, as Hunt, stooping, shook him by the shoulder.

"Wake up! Wake up there," insisted Larry, shaking him roughly.

The big teamster threw back his blanket and rose to a sitting posture. His small eyes blinked in the lantern light, as he glanced with a scowling face on those around him.

"What ye want o' me?" he snarled, angrily.

"What have you been doing out here?" demanded Larry Hunt, sharply.

"Sleepin'."

"Why didn't you sleep with the men?"

"Couldn't stan' their snorin'."

"How do you know they snore? You haven't been with them all night," rejoined Hunt, impatiently.

"I've lived with Gusty Peters afore this," retorted Black Jake, doggedly, "an' I know the tunes he plays

on thet bugle o' his — specially when it's ben thumped. I tell ye I was tired an' wanted t' sleep."

"What have you got on your hands?" demanded Eustace.

"Thet's none o' your business," was the surly response.

"An' I guess it is," asserted Eustace, with spirit.

"Better keep a civil tongue in your head an' answer his questions," admonished Larry Hunt.

"I reckon it's wheel-grease," declared Jasper.

"Looks more like pitch to me," insisted Eustace.

"Shouldn't wonder 'n' there might be some," admitted Jasper, coolly. "Wouldn't be at all surprisin', seein' es how I've carried a new fir bindin'-pole on my load all day."

"That's so," admitted Eustace, recognizing the truth of this statement.

"Look here, Jake," said Hunt, sternly, "someone has tried to set fire to one of the small camps, and it looks to us as if you had about the best chance of anyone to do it."

"Do you mean t' say I done it?" demanded Jake, in angry tones.

"Why didn't you come and help put out the fire?" asked Hunt, avoiding the question.

"Didn't know there was any. I tell ye I'd 'a' ben asleep now, if ye hadn't woke me up."

"Any more questions?" asked Hunt, turning to Eustace.

"I pass," was the dry response.

The party returned in silence to the sporting camp. Eustace lingered on the piazza a moment with the camp owner, after the others had gone within.

Larry Hunt held up his lantern so that its rays fell full in the face of the Sebois boss.

"Well?" he said, interrogatively.

"We know a good many things in this life, Larry, that we can't prove," said Eustace. "Good night," and, turning abruptly on his heel, he followed his companions into the camp.

At the foot of the Pitch. — *Page 38.*

CHAPTER IV

THE TRIP TO SEBOIS GRAND LAKE

"They've shot the chutes!" exclaimed Eustace, as he and his companions came out of their sleeping quarters the next morning on their way to breakfast in the big camp.

It was evident that the Sebois boss was not a little surprised and relieved.

"What makes you think that?" demanded Norman.

"Their buckboard's gone."

"Ba geenger, dat was ban so," corroborated Felix.

> "And the night it was filled with trouble,
> But the toughs that infested the day,
> They folded their tents like the Arabs,
> And silently stole away."

This bit of parody from Norman raised a laugh from his companions.

"That about sizes up the situation," declared Eustace.

"Is it original?" inquired Fred Warner.

"In spots," laughed Norman. "I feel just a little guilty for butchering it that way."

"If the boys suspect you of being a poet, they'll keep you mighty busy," said Eustace. "We had a

long-haired fellow on the drive last spring who could reel it off by the yard. It really had lots of jingle in it; rhymed first-rate. He certainly did have a genuine gift."

"Don't ever quote me as being a poet," said Norman, in alarm. "If you do, I'll be sorry I ever opened my mouth."

"Oh, we won't give you away," agreed Eustace, "though I suspect you could do a pretty smooth job if you were put to it."

Only the Sebois men were in the big office when they entered it. Larry Hunt was behind the counter fixing up the contents of a small mail pouch which would go out to Patten by a tote-team later in the day.

"Lost your Allegash crew?" questioned Eustace.

"Yes. They asked if I could give 'em a 4.30 breakfast, and I allowed I could. Tell the truth, I wasn't anxious to have them mix in with your fellows again. I was afraid something might drop."

"Couldn't 'a' wasted much time on their grub," commented Eustace.

"They didn't," admitted Hunt. "They were all through and headed for Eagle Lake by ten minutes of five."

Soon after, having finished their breakfast, Eustace and his men were grouped on Pete Bedotte's buckboard and making their way towards Snow-shoe Lake, which joined Sebois Grand Lake on the south.

The road was even worse than the day before, and

most of the men were glad to walk on ahead of the buckboard. Norman, determined to learn all he could before reaching the main camp, kept along with Eustace somewhat in the rear of the others.

"I'm going to have a couple of batteaux meet us at the foot of Snow-shoe Lake, and let Pete go back with his team," said the boss. "We shall have to carry around the dam at the foot of Grand Lake; but that's better than to try toting up there by team at this time of year."

"Is this the principal part of the East Branch drive?" asked Norman.

"No, indeed!" returned Eustace. "There will be about 40,000,000 feet of logs driven down the East Branch this spring, which will be about 20,000,000 shy of last year's drive. Of this total only about 6,000,000 will come from Sebois waters."

"Is it all for lumber?"

"No. The Katahdin Pulp and Paper Company cuts considerable timber on East Branch waters. They will have about five million and a half in this year's drive."

"Does all this go down together?" inquired Norman.

"Yes, it's all handled by the Penobscot East Branch Log Driving Company — the fellows we are working for."

"How many different concerns will be represented in this year's drive?" asked Norman.

"I should say about a dozen," returned Eustace.

"How do they get the logs that belong to them?" persisted Norman.

"They are all sorted in the big booms," explained Eustace. "Every log carries the special mark of its owner, and the experienced workers on the booms have no difficulty in recognizing them. A boom, you know, is a chain of logs fastened together at the ends which stretches from shore to shore, or from the shore to some pier or island in midstream. In either event it forms a barrier which keeps the logs from floating past until they have been sorted."

"Do all these logs go down the East Branch at the same time?"

"No. You might say that the East Branch drive is made up really of three separate drives. The logs cut on Grand Lake and its waters make up the first drive, which if the ice went out yesterday as I expect it did, is already on its way. The second drive will start about June fifth, and is made up of the timber cut on Chamberlain Lake and the waters between it and Grand Lake. That's the drive we join. I expect to start our drive day after to-morrow, May fifteenth, and get into the East Branch middle drive in from thirty to thirty-five days. That would bring us there between June twentieth to twenty-fifth. The distance from our big landing at the head of Sebois Grand Lake to the East Branch is about thirty-five miles."

"Then you plan to make about a mile a day?"

"That's about as well as we can hope to do," said

Eustace. "We shall have more or less logs to drive out of the small streams and brooks along the way — and then there are better waters to drive than those of the Sebois river."

"Are there two Grand Lakes?"

"Yes. There's Grand Lake, that's on the East Branch waters, and Sebois Grand Lake, that's on the Sebois waters."

"Where do the East Branch drivers finish?"

"At Greenbush, the main booms on the Penobscot, just above Old Town."

"I hope I can go clear through," declared Norman.

"I hope you can. I'm sure," responded Eustace, cordially; "but perhaps you'll not be so enthusiastic by the time we're out of the Sebois."

"I'm very sure I shall," declared Norman, in a tone of conviction.

"I hope you will," returned Eustace, dubiously.

At noon the party stopped on the top of a moss-grown ridge, on the south slope of which a beautiful boiling spring afforded an abundance of pure water. The horses were taken from the buckboard, and their bridles removed. They were then tied to some trees and given a generous "bait" of hay and oats. A roaring fire was made, over which Felix Lamarre and Fred Warner speedily prepared a rough but appetizing meal for the hungry men who, sitting about on some logs that had been cut to serve as improvised deacon seats, showed their appreciation of it in a most prac-

tical way. To Norman, in all the keen zest of a woods appetite, it tasted better than the most elaborate meal he had ever eaten at home, and was a repast long to be remembered.

The men were already fraternizing with the rough fellowship of the woods, and spiced their meal with a boisterous interchange of rough chaffing that passed for jokes, and with bits of personal experience in logging-camps, and on the drives.

"Mind thet man Smithers?" demanded Long Tom Boggs, pausing a moment in the act of carrying a cup of steaming tea to his mouth.

"Sure!"

"Knew 'im well."

"Bat yo' life," came in quick response from various members of the crew.

"He was a great white water man," asserted Boggs, aggressively.

"Limber es an eel," agreed Jud Skinner. "I drove with 'im one year over on th' Allegash."

"I've heared es how he rid a log through th' Hullin' Machine," continued Boggs.

"Ya-as. Seeum do it," declared Sol Soc.

"Guess there's no doubt on it," corroborated Skinner. "All th' members o' thet crew swear to it, but I swan I don't see how it was possible."

"Fact," assented Long Tom; "but there's many the time on th' drive thet I've looked back on th' places where th' boys hev come through on logs, an' in th'

boats, 'n' wondered as how in th' world it ever could 'a' happened."

"It's surprising what places a good driver can pull through with a whole skin," declared Eustace. "I surmise that old Soc'll make you all go some this drive. There's mighty few men who would dare to follow him in a batteau, and he can do a fair turn on the logs."

The men nodded their approval of this statement.

"Ugh!" grunted the Indian. "All takum chance on dribe."

"You were with Smithers when he was killed, I've hearn tell," said Skinner.

"Ya-as. He drinkum rum. Go wit' me cut key-log ver' bad jam on Jule ledge. Dem logs she ban all hung up dere. Chopum half log. Jam break. I run. Get shore. Big log end over knock Smit'er in white water. She go over falls. Ben drownded. Dat all."

"They didn't find his body until it floated into the main boom a month later," declared Skinner.

"A man wants a clear head when he's working on the logs," said Eustace. "It's a good plan for men on the drive to let rum alone, and I've found that I can get along better to cut it out altogether."

"They tell me this man Barney O'Connor is a mighty nervy, trappy driver," said Boggs.

"That's just what he is," assented Eustace. "You may rest sure that I'll never ask any one of you to go where he doesn't dare to."

It was about an hour after the party resumed its journey when it came to the dam at the foot of Sebois Grand Lake. The ring of axes and the shout of voices had announced the presence of O'Connor and his men, some time in advance.

"Arrah! It's mighty glad I am to see yez," declared Barney O'Connor heartily as he came forward to shake hands with Eustace, as Pete Bedotte drew up his horses.

Norman looked at the young Irishman curiously and was forced to admit that he measured up in his physical characteristics, to his reputation as a skilful and daring waterman. He was nearly six feet tall, and straight as an arrow. His eyes were a clear blue, and carried the suggestion of a smile. His face, naturally light-skinned, was browned and weather-beaten by exposure. His hands, long of finger and firm of grasp, were calloused from hard work. O'Connor was still a young man, but little past thirty, and yet stories of his daring exploits were current among all the drivers on the Penobscot and Allegash waters. Eustace counted himself fortunate to have him in his crew.

O'Connor's very presence radiated an atmosphere of good-fellowship, and as Norman shook hands with him, in response to the introduction of Eustace, he felt that he should number him among his friends.

"I hov thim boats jist forninst the dam," announced O'Connor, when he had briefly passed the time of day. "Do yez want any av me byes to hilp yez load your dunnage?"

"No. We've crew enough for that," responded Eustace. "How much longer will it take to finish this dam?"

"Begorra, wid your min to hilp, Oi'm a-thinkin' we'll be afther makin' it look moighty sick by to-morrow noight."

"Just what I was planning on," said Eustace, well pleased. "Begin breaking in that landing day after to-morrow, can't we?"

"Sure it's not me thot sees onything to prevint."

"That's what we'll do," declared Eustace, with emphasis. "I don't want to waste an hour, Barney," he added. "We can't count on this pitch of water for any great length of time and we must make the most of it while it lasts, especially in getting out the brook drives."

"Thot's what," assented O'Connor.

The men began lugging their dunnage and the other things on the buckboard up a winding hillside path that led through the bushes, to the lake above the dam, where three large batteaux, the flaring boats used in river driving, were drawn upon the shore.

"It's roight glad Oi am to be seein' ye," said O'Connor, giving Felix Lamarre a slap on the shoulder. "We've been a-drafting our cooks since we left Hunt's, an' it's not wan proize thot we've drawn."

"I bat yo' I feex yo' out for nice t'ing for eat," declared Felix, affably, well pleased at the Irishman's compliment.

The cook entered the boat and began packing away his dunnage, his face wreathed in smiles.

"Ah, Barney, the blarney! I see where the rest of us take the leavin's," said Jud Skinner, who had reached the boat in time to overhear O'Connor's remarks.

"A little palaver is a foine currency, Jud, me bye," replied the Irishman, good-naturedly, "but Oi'm thinkin' it's moighty little ye'll iver be buyin' wid it."

With four men at the oars, a bowman and a steersman, two of the boats were soon manned and on their way to the camp, the third remaining for the use of O'Connor and his crew when they finished their day's work on the dam.

Norman, who pulled a long oar opposite Fred Warner, soon caught the knack of it and acquitted himself with credit. The sun was nearing the horizon when they finally ran their boats up the gently sloping, sandy shore in front of the camp.

The little clearing was evidently an old one. Tree stumps had disappeared and the ground was carpeted with green grass nearly down to the water's edge. In the background was a more or less open growth of white birch and fir-trees.

Two big open-front tents of the lean-to order stood end to end about sixty yards back from the shore. A little way to the right were two other smaller tents, one of which was evidently the special storehouse for camp supplies, and the other, the domicile of the cook. In front of one of these tents a bright fire was burning,

over which a big iron kettle, strung on a pole the ends of which rested on crotched sticks, was boiling briskly.

The big tents were of the crudest character. Two large crotched sticks were driven into the ground some distance apart. These supported a stout, horizontal pole. Against this pole at intervals rested the ends of the other poles which, slanting backward at right angles to it, with their opposite ends upon the ground, formed a rude, shed-like framework. Over this was spread a heavy canvas which closed in the roof and ends, leaving the entire front open to the weather. A short distance in front of the rear walls of these tents, logs about six inches in diameter extended, upon the ground, from end to end of the enclosures. Behind these logs and extending to the rear walls of the tents, were the fir-bough beds, breathing aromatic odors, and so laid as to secure the greatest amount of comfort. These boughs were covered with heavy gray blankets, and upon them, lying side by side, with their feet to the blazing fires in front of the tents, the men secured that dreamless sleep that comes to tired, healthy bodies.

The nights were cold in that section, even well into the summer, and the big camp fires, extending clear across the tent fronts, were kept burning through the night.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Eustace, when Norman had finished his inspection.

"It's great."

"Rather a good camping place I think myself.

We'll sleep on many a worse one before we reach the East Branch. There's one of the finest springs of water in Maine on the lake shore there, about a hundred feet back of the wangan."

A big, tall man, with slightly stooping shoulders, came out of the cook's tent.

"Hooray! Ba golly, I ban glad for see yo'," he said, with enthusiasm, catching sight of Felix.

"Bonjour, Joe," said Lamarre, cordially. "W'at yo' ban do?"

"Dey tole me I ban cook on top dees place," was the disgusted response. "Joe Landre cook! Saprè diable!"

"W'at yo' cook?" asked Felix, nodding towards the steaming kettle.

"Som' swogan stew!"

"I feex heem. Put som' dough-boy on top heem," said Felix, who, in a few minutes, was in full charge of the cook's camp. Big tins of light-looking cream of tartar biscuits were soon cooking in a big Dutch oven before the fire, while Joe was running a big fire in the bean hole to accumulate the red-hot coals necessary to the night's baking.

As the darkness came on the big fires in front of the men's camp were started, sending long streamers of light across the dark waters of the lake, and throwing the sombre forest background into deeper shadow.

Down the lake came the rhythmic dip of oars, and the singing voices of men. Presently another batteau

was drawn up on the sandy beach, while O'Connor and his men joined the others of the crew in strenuous toilets at the lake shore. A little later the men sat around on logs and packing boxes in the ruddy glare of the firelight, eating from tin dishes the hearty supper which Felix Lamarre had prepared for them, and washing it down with dippers of strong tea.

It was evident to Norman that there would be no setting of tables on the drive.

"You and Fred may sleep next to me on the further end of that second tent," said Eustace to Norman as, with tin plate and dipper of tea in hand, he took a seat on the same log with him. "It may bother you a spell, but, when you get waywised a bit, you'll like it. They all do."

There was a general resort to pipes after supper. Some stories were told; a few snatches of song were sung, and then one by one the men sought their beds. By half-past eight the last man had turned in, and the silence of the wilderness brooded over the camp.

CHAPTER V

'POLEON CARON'S WINDIGO

It was a new experience for Norman, radically different from anything he had undergone in the logging-camp at Quadrate Lake.

It should be explained here, for the benefit of those who may not have read "All Among the Loggers," the first volume of this series, that Quadrate Lake was a large body of water located in the Northern Maine wilderness. Upon its shores the Lakeland Lumber Company, which conducted large timber operations in that section, had a set of log camps which constituted the winter home of one of its logging-crews.

To this place, Norman Carver, the only son of General Carver, a leading Boston attorney and one of the stockholders in the Lakeland Company, had been sent the winter prior to the opening of this story to act as clerk of the crew. While in no sense a vicious boy, he had nevertheless formed some acquaintances that were not to his father's liking. In a spirit of thoughtless mischief he had joined with some of them in breaking into the home of a collector of antiques and securing a suit of ancient armor, which they used to decorate the statue of the founder of their school.

Although Norman escaped what might easily have been very serious results of this escapade, General Carver decided to send him into the Maine woods to act as clerk of the logging-crew at Quadrate Lake, in the belief that the experience would be a valuable one for the boy. He was impelled the more to this course from the fact that Norman's mother was dead, and his own busy professional duties engrossed the larger part of his time.

It was a new life, full of strange scenes and experiences for Norman, accustomed only to the associations of a big city, but he entered upon it with a determination to make good — and succeeded.

At Quadrate Lake he formed a warm friendship with Fred Warner, a boy of about his age, who was acting as cookee, or cook's assistant. He was a fine, manly young fellow, who had enjoyed few of the advantages which had been enjoyed by Norman. His mother was a widow with three children younger than himself, living on a farm which had been partially cleared by her husband before his death. As the eldest of the family, Fred had been obliged to work very hard to assist her in securing a livelihood, and in keeping the younger children in school.

Norman not only mastered the duties of his position, but was also successful in winning the friendship of the rough but kind-hearted men who made up the logging-crew. He came to have a warm affection for the rugged characters about him. Jim Benner, an

old-time logger, Big Pete Bedotte, a gigantic French teamster, Felix Lamarre, the capable camp cook, Jud Skinner, a typical Yankee woodsman, Sol Soc, an Old Town Indian of powerful build, whose life Norman saved, thereby winning his enduring gratitude, and Billy Eustace, the energetic camp boss, were among those with whom he was brought most in contact, and for whom he formed a specially close and warm attachment.

Too much space would be required to review in detail the adventures that befell Norman during his winter in camp. His detention in a sporting camp by one "Clouter Kelty," a notorious outlaw, who later came to a tragic death — these and many other things are told at length in the first volume of this series.

At the close of the winter's logging operations he was invited by Billy Eustace to act as clerk of the drive on the Sebois river, a tributary of the East Branch of the Penobscot. As Eustace was to have personal charge of the drive, Norman was very anxious to go with him, and after some persuasion was successful in securing his father's consent. It was thus that he came amid the scenes and associations in which the reader now finds him.

He found it impossible to sleep and lay upon his fragrant bed of balsam fir with half-open eyes, keenly yet restfully conscious of the various noises that came from the lake surface, and the shadowy background of forest.

Moist, woodsy odors filled the air. A light wind swayed the tree-tops and made them vocal with a thousand voices. With monotonous regularity came the lap of waters upon the sandy beach. To Norman's senses, preternaturally alert, they seemed to carry a distinct note of melancholy. Perhaps they were singing a dirge for some lost knight of spike-sole shoes! Perhaps it was the spirit of the vanishing forest breathing its mournful cadence through the waters!

What nonsense! Norman aroused himself from this spirit of lazy reverie with an effort. Never before had he found it so deliciously easy to soar away into the realm of imagination; never before had Mother Nature been so rich in suggestions, that came rushing, tumbling, crowding out of a drowsy, shadowy background to project themselves upon his consciousness. Far down the lake came a wild, weird cry that made Norman's flesh creep. It seemed like the last despairing wail of a lost spirit, ending in a harrowing, blood-curdling bust of maniac laughter.

"A loon," explained Fred Warner's sleepy voice.

Norman was relieved. He would have been glad to have talked further with Fred, but the measured breathing of the cookee showed that he was already fast asleep again, leaving Norman once more in undisputed possession of the night and its voices.

The flickering camp fires bored pathways of light across the dark waters of the lake along which troupes of dancing sprites held merry carnival.

There was a movement in the other sleeping tent.

The form of a man showed indistinctly in the fire-glow for a moment, and vanished. Presently he reappeared, his arms full of wood, and replenished the big fires, which were beginning to burn low. In the light of the new flames that rewarded his efforts, Norman recognized the good-natured face of Barney O'Connor.

There was a general shifting of positions among the sleepers, a few yawns, and once more the men of the crew were lost in the oblivion of slumber.

As Norman watched the fantastic shadows dance and play upon the waters of the lake, a magnificent buck deer, with beautiful antlers, came into view around a clump of alder bushes on the lake shore, and stood fully revealed in the firelight, like a ghost of the night.

For a moment the superb creature stood alert and listening, then, reassured, he waded a short distance into the lake, and drank greedily of its cold waters.

Having finished his potations he turned quietly to the shore again, and disappeared from view in the alder bushes as silently as he had come.

Norman felt himself beginning to grow drowsy. Several times he nodded on the borderland, and was on the point of dropping fast asleep when a new and terrifying vision opened his eyes to their fullest extent, sent the quick blood tingling through his veins, and made him wide awake.

Slowly walking across the camp front, in the space between the fires and the lake shore, was the white-

robed figure of an old man, bent and decrepit. Coarse light hair fell, in a waving mass, down his shoulders. A heavy beard of the same color covered his face, and flowed down his chest. He carried a long staff, and moved with slow and solemn tread.

For a moment Norman rubbed his eyes, in amazement, confident that his imagination was playing him some trick. There was no mistake about it, however. The old man was a reality, and not a dream.

Norman felt the cold shivers run down his back. There was something uncanny in this apparition. He determined, however, to feign sleep, and watch it out.

Slowly the ancient night prowler made his way down the front of the camps, then, turning, retraced his steps with the same measured tread.

As he neared the upper end of the right hand camp, where Norman had first seen him, a man appeared stretching and yawning at the front of the big tent, for the evident purpose of replenishing the fire which was beginning to burn low.

He stopped short, as if he had been turned to stone, when his eyes rested upon the old man. His mouth was open, his face chalky white, and his eyes were big with fear. Never before had Norman looked upon such a picture of abject terror.

The ancient pilgrim paused in his solemn march and slowly pointed at the frightened man a long forefinger, which glowed in the shadow like a coal of fire.

This act operated upon its unhappy victim like an

electric shock. Turning swiftly he made a wild leap back into the camp. At the same time he recovered his voice.

"O Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!" he shrieked, in agonized tones.

In a moment the camps were stirring with life and animation, as the startled members of the crew jumped to their feet and crowded about the frenzied man.

"What's up? W'at de troub' on yo'? W'y for yo' holler so?" they questioned in chorus, but the terrified man continued to jump up and down, giving vent to a series of disjointed and incoherent yells.

Norman looked for the old man, but he had disappeared. His first impulse was to explain the Frenchman's panic by telling what he had seen; but a feeling of caution restrained him. He was not a believer in the supernatural. There must be some reasonable explanation to this seeming mystery, and he resolved to spare no effort to discover it.

Meanwhile the unhappy Frenchman was still howling, in a paroxysm of fear — unable to give any explanation of his condition to the eager men about him.

"Come on out o' yer trance, ye spalpeen," roared Barney O'Connor, seizing him by both shoulders, and shaking him as a terrier would a rat. "What ye ben dramin'?"

"De Windigo! De Windigo!" gasped the Frenchman, in accents of horror.

Some of the crew looked upon him with startled faces.

"Go way wid ye!" returned O'Connor, scornfully. "Shure the sperit o' the wind is not abroad this noight, ye spalpeen. Wake up wid ye! It's along the Devil's way yes ben dramin'."

"Saprè diable! It ban no dream I tole for you," protested the Frenchman. "I see heem on ma eye. He walk heem behin' dat fire — white dress, beeg pole een hees hand. Hees hair all long; beeg beard on hees front. Hees eye, wan, two, mebbe trois, coal fire. He point heem ver' long feenger on me. Ba cripe! I tole you it ban wan firebrand. Eet scratch me on ma breath. O Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!" he added, his voice rising in a shrill crescendo of apprehension. "De Windigo com'. He put hees mark on 'Poleon Caron. I ban dead man for sure!"

"Go way wid ye," shouted O'Connor, in tones of disgust. "I'll be bettin' you a tin-dollar bill thot it's all the rist of us ye'll outlive. Drop ye noightmare and go back ter bed. Shure, it's ashamed ye should be ter wake us all up and spile our slape."

"I tole yo' it ban me no dream," protested Caron, doggedly. "It ban de Windigo. I seen him rat on ma eye."

It was evident, however, that the men had accepted O'Connor's version of the situation. They were convinced that Caron had been the victim of a bad dream. While they were not without a rough sympathy for

him in his unhappy experience, still they could not help chaffing him a little as they went back to their beds again.

"I don't just like the looks of this thing," said Eustace to Norman, as he pulled his blanket over him. "Lots of these fellows are mighty superstitious. If they should get a notion into their fool heads that some spook or other was gunning for them, there'd simply be no holding them. They'd clear out like a flock of sheep, and I haven't a man to spare. Got to have more, rather than less."

"Do you think he really saw something?" asked Norman.

"I've no doubt he did," was the whispered response. "It's well enough to let it go Barney's way, but it looks to me as if some of the boys had been stringing him a little. I never saw a man frightened that way by a dream."

Norman's lying-awake mood was passed, and in a few minutes he was as sound asleep as any of the crew. He was awakened about three o'clock in the morning by Fred Warner crawling out from under the blanket.

"What's up?" he whispered.

"Time for Felix and me to go to work," returned Fred. "You can sleep a spell longer."

"What are the hours, anyway?"

"From dawn to darkness on the drive," returned Warner. "We have four meals a day and work as long as we can see."

"What do they do Sundays?"

"There *are* no Sundays or holidays on the drive. It's pretty much all work," responded Fred.

It seemed to Norman that he had barely fallen to sleep again, after Warner had left him, when he was awakened by the shrill voice of Felix Lamarre.

"Turn-ou-ou-ou-t! Tea all hot. Bean on plate."

"That last part is a special frill with Felix," said Eustace, with a laugh.

"I thought Fred called the men," said Norman.

"He does, most of the time," was the response, "but sometimes it falls to Felix. I reckon Fred's lugging water."

"That's so," said Norman, glancing towards the cook's camp, where Warner was just putting in an appearance with a brimming pail of water in each hand.

With a cake of soap and a towel in his hand Norman followed Eustace to the lake, where he enjoyed a washing up in its cold waters, a tin wash basin on a cracker box being the only accessory furnished by the camp. Fortunately Norman, through the advice of Eustace, had come provided with a pocket comb and a small hand mirror.

The sun was only a crescent face above the eastern tree-tops when Norman seated himself beside Eustace on a log, with his plate of hot beans, and a dipper of steaming tea.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked.

"You will take charge of the wangan. It's in the tent to rear of the cook's tent," returned the boss, "and also keep the time books, and the supply accounts. Barney will have charge of the repairs on the dam to-day, and I'll stop a spell and get you started. After you come to know the men it will be easy enough. Of course you'll go along with the cook's batteau, and keep a general oversight of your interests in it."

"It doesn't look as if this job would be as hard as the one I had at Quadrate Lake," declared Norman.

"It won't in itself; but as you'll be expected to make yourself generally useful, I reckon you'll find work enough to keep you out of mischief. Hello! Sol's breaking in the landing," he added, as a burst of laughter came from the men of the crew.

Norman glanced at the lake where, a short distance from the shore, Sol Soc was coolly making his way on a log, which he deftly propelled with a paddle. Norman could but admire the unconscious ease and grace with which he navigated his uncertain craft.

"He's going to challenge the boys to a birling match," said Eustace.

Even as he spoke Sol was turning the log, which he presently ran upon the shore.

"Gotum good man?" he grunted, as he looked at the crew.

Barney O'Connor rose and laid aside his plate. "Hold on!" shouted Long Tom Boggs, who had also risen. "Let me have him this time. It will be time

enough for you when he's tired out some of us small fry."

"Go on, and good luck to ye," returned Barney, good-naturedly. "I suspict ye'll be able for t' give him a foine run for his money."

"Go in! Do him up!" shouted the men.

Boggs stepped lightly upon the end of the log which rested against the shore. He pushed it out into the lake with the paddle which Sol passed him, and which, having thus used, he threw ashore. He turned and faced his competitor with a look of challenge in his eyes. The crew with boisterous enthusiasm urged him to battle.

"Watch him sharp!"

"Keep heem on yo' eye!"

"Look out for his snub!"

"Hoe in, old boy, hoe in!" were a few of the admonitions that were hurled after him by his noisy partisans.

It was distinctly a contest of drivers' skill in the art of balance, and the use of spike-sole shoes. The Indian eyed his opponent warily for a moment and then began to tread round and round the log, making it rotate with constantly greater and greater speed as he increased his pace. Boggs, narrowly watching his every move, kept careful pace with him until the log on which they stood went whirling around in the water like a mill wheel.

Suddenly the Indian changed his tactics. Jumping

his spike-soles into the log, he threw his weight on the opposite side from which it was rolling. The "snub" was so sudden that it nearly sent Boggs into the lake. For a moment the tall driver tottered uncertainly, but, with a mighty effort, regained his equilibrium amid the hilarious shouts of his supporters on the shore.

"Good," grunted the Indian approvingly, well pleased to find that he had a competitor worthy of his mettle.

"I was nigh bein' your meat thet time," admitted Boggs, good-naturedly.

"All leady," said the Indian. "Me playin' fair."

Again he raced madly about the log, the nimble Boggs keeping close pace with him.

Presently, with a quick jump, the Indian faced about and arresting the motion of the log set it rolling in the opposite direction; but this time Boggs chased him closely enough to catch and follow the change of movement.

"Ugh! Good man!" complimented the Indian.

"Hooraw!"

"Hang to 'im, Tom!"

"You geeve heem good duckin'."

With these, and other shouts of approval, the men on the shore voiced their appreciation of Boggs' prowess.

The Indian now began a new series of tactics, rushing the log madly about under his spike-soles for a time, and then suddenly jumping his spikes well into either side, and rocking it violently back and forth.

"Thot's an ould dodge, Tom! Lay for him, me bye!" shouted Barney O'Connor; but Boggs was plainly losing ground. His breath was coming hard and fast, and it was evident that he was no match for the Indian, who was just warming up to his best work. One more birl, a quick snub, and Boggs went sliding into the cold waters of the lake, amid the uproarious laughter of the crew.

"It's to worruk now or I'd be afther givin' ye a dig mesilf," shouted O'Connor to the victor. "It's out we'll have it, me bye, ut the very first chance, whin both of us are frish."

"Me want good men," responded the Indian.

"The big warrior was too much for me," confessed Boggs, as he waded ashore.

"I see where he needs some dry clothes," said Norman to Eustace.

The boss gave him a quizzical look.

"That's something we don't have on the drive," he said.

"You don't mean that he'll go to work in those wet clothes, do you?" demanded Norman, in amazement.

"That's just what he'll do and be the better for it," returned Eustace. "The man who lets his wet clothing dry upon him rarely gets cold from it. Few of the men will have dry feet again for weeks to come. Now for the books," he added, as the men were getting into the batteaux for the trip to the dam. "I don't expect to help you on them again during the entire drive."

CHAPTER VI

THE CAPTURE OF THE WINDIGO

"Jump 'em in, boys! Lay to 'em there!"

Eustace was a bundle of energy, "a reg'lar dynamo in trousers," to use the language of Jud Skinner, as he directed the work of "breaking in" the landing at the head of Sebois Grand Lake a day later. He seemed to be everywhere, shouting his orders in quick, sharp tones, and inspiring with something of his own indomitable spirit the perspiring men, who, peaveys in hand, swarmed over the big pile of logs, rolling them from the cross skids upon which they had been piled, into the waters of the lake. Once there other men with long, slender spruce poles having a sharp steel pick in the end, and universally known to Maine lumbermen and river drivers as a "pickpole," were pushing them clear of the mass and starting them on their long journey to the sawmills on the Penobscot. The work was somewhat facilitated by a strong wind that was blowing down the lake.

Norman gasped with astonishment at the ease with which the men of the crew, in their spike-soled shoes, kept their footing upon the floating logs, jumping from one to another with wonderful agility and the confident

accuracy gained from long experience. Although they seemed to him to take exceedingly long and hazardous chances, there were no mishaps, and the work of putting the big pile of logs afloat went forward without accident and without delay.

"This is great luck," said Eustace with enthusiasm, as he paused a moment beside Norman. "This south wind will land the logs at the foot of the lake for us. Barney O'Connor and some of the men are following this first run and will be there to drive them through the sluiceway at the dam. If this only holds a couple days or so, we shall certainly get a good start. There's one good thing 'bout landing logs on a lake," he added, "you are sure of plenty of water room, which isn't always the case when you break in a landing on a stream — especially if it's a narrow one. I remember a landing old Bill Norton broke in one spring up on Trout Brook. The logs were piled high, and the banks weren't a great way apart. All to once that whole brow of logs slid out on them, and filled that channel plumb-full from shore to shore. I tell you 'twas an awful mess. You could have heard Bill swear a mile. He was the most blasphemous fellow I ever knew. It certainly was a bad mix-up. Hung them up there for more than a week. They had to dog warp a good big part of those logs into the water."

"Dog warp?" repeated Norman.

"Yes, pulled them out with a rope, hitched onto a steel spike, or dog as they call it. driven into each log.

It was mighty slow and tedious business, I tell you. It fairly made Bill's hair turn gray; but it was the only way out of the scrape. Hey there! Hold that other end with your peavey. She's swinging off the skids! Get a jump there!" and Eustace hurried away to superintend the rolling in of the logs.

For a few moments Norman continued to watch the animated scene, and then, turning, made his way reluctantly back to the camp, conscious of the fact that he, too, had his work to do.

He found Fred Warner at the spring and lugged one of his pails full of water for him to the cook's tent, where Felix Lamarre was hard at work preparing the ten o'clock lunch for the men.

"Did you hear the Windigo last night?" asked the cookee with a smile, as they walked along.

"I neither heard him nor saw him last night," returned Norman.

"I reckon no one but 'Poleon Caron ever saw him," said Warner, lightly.

"You are wrong, Fred," declared Norman. "That scare of Caron's was no dream. The Windigo, as he called him, was certainly patrolling the camp between the fires and the lake-shore. There is no doubt about it. I saw him myself."

"You!" exclaimed Warner, incredulously.

"Certainly," returned Norman, and, pledging his companion to secrecy, he related to him his surprising observations during the wakeful hours of his first night

in camp. "I thought it was best not to make any talk about it," he concluded.

"That was right," said Warner, approvingly. "If you had you would have been in the same class with 'Poleon. The men are still guying him about it, and he's nearly come to the conclusion himself that it was all a bad dream."

"What do you suppose it was?" asked Norman.

"Why, the only thing it could be," returned Warner. "Some one of the crew playing a ghost act. He was walking up and down there knowing very well that, sooner or later, some one of the men would get up to put wood on the fire."

"What if he'd struck some one of the boys who wasn't superstitious?" suggested Norman.

"That would have been somewhat difficult," returned Fred, dryly. "It seems, though, that he was seen by one such," he added, with a laugh.

"So you think any of the crew who were not superstitious would have acted just as I did?"

"I do, with the possible exception of Billy Eustace. He knows from experience how difficult it is to hold a crew in this region when they once get the notion into their heads that there is a haunt in the neighborhood."

"I thought he was annoyed over the matter," said Norman.

"He was very much annoyed," declared Fred. "I happen to know that he kept a mighty close watch over

things last night, but he might have known, if he'd stopped to think, that no practical joker would follow up a crack like that for two nights in succession."

"I don't think Nature ever intended Billy for a Sherlock Holmes," observed Norman.

"Far from it," laughed Fred. "He's learned some things from experience, however. One is the great difficulty of reforming a practical joker on the drive. It's the thirst for excitement — for something to break up the monotony of the life. It's about as bad, in a way, as the appetite for strong drink. It's not easy for the man who has the practical joke habit to turn away from it, and lead a better life. Most of the men are too tired when night comes to play pranks; but now and then there's one that always seems to have some surplus energy left over from his day's work. Nine times out of ten he's one of the very best drivers in the crew. Such men will bear watching."

"Let's do it!" exclaimed Norman.

"Do what?"

"Catch the Windigo."

"I don't see how we are going to do it," said Fred, doubtfully. "You and I sleep at the further end of the second camp. What's to prevent the Windigo from getting away into the woods around the opposite end of the other camp?"

"Sol Soc," said Norman, confidently.

"Sol Soc?" echoed Warner, doubtfully.

"Yes," insisted Norman. "You know he sleeps at

the outer end of the other camp. It would take a streak of greased lightning to get by him. What an end he'd make on a football team! We could wait until the Windigo got about midway of the two camps. Then we could hustle out and close up this end of his beat. Sol could close up the other end, and then we'd have him nicely pocketed between the fires and the lake."

"The Devil and the deep sea," supplemented Warner.

"I don't believe he could escape us," declared Norman.

"I reckon we'd have him cooked to a turn," said Fred.

At 9.30 o'clock Norman helped Warner carry the lunch to the men at work on the landing. Down the cookee's back hung a double row of shiny pint tin dippers strung by the handles upon a stout piece of shingle rope that hung like a sash from his right shoulder.

He also carried by the bail an immense coffee-pot full of that steaming beverage, while Norman carried two big covered wooden buckets, in one of which were big baking-powder biscuits and in the other doughnuts and sweet bread. There was also a tin plate and an iron knife for each member of the crew.

They were heartily greeted by the men of the crew who sat around upon the logs of the landing and ate their plain fare with evident relish, indulging meanwhile in rough jest and repartee.

"Seen that 'ere Windigo lately?" inquired Jud Skinner of 'Poleon Caron.

"Ba Joe! Da ban wan jus' sam'—I t'ink," responded 'Poleon, weakly. It was evident that he was beginning to be a trifle uncertain as to whether his harrowing fright had been the result of a dream, or an actual experience. There was something decidedly disconcerting in the scoffing laughter of the men, and it was very clear that 'Poleon had no desire to discuss the matter.

Various comments, and views intended to chaff 'Poleon, were offered by different members of the crew.

While the matter was still under discussion, Norman improved the opportunity to have a word with Sol Soc, who sat, some distance apart from the others, eating his meal in customary silence.

"How do," he grunted, as Norman sat down beside him.

"How are you, Sol," returned Norman, cordially. He glanced cautiously about and seeing that the others were engrossed in their own conversation, plunged at once into the subject he desired to discuss with the Indian.

"Sol," he said, in a low tone, "I want you to help Fred Warner and me catch the Windigo."

The Indian looked at him with the faint suggestion of a twinkle in his dark eyes.

"Him big job," he said. "Windigo ver' bad spirit.

Ridum on storm wings. Grabum wicked people. No seeum again."

"That may be true of the real Windigo, Sol," laughed Norman, "but that isn't the one I'm talking about. I mean 'Poleon Caron's Windigo."

"Him 'noder feller," declared Sol.

"I know he is," declared Norman.

"You seeum?" asked the Indian.

"Yes."

"Me, too."

"You don't mean to say you saw him," exclaimed Norman.

The Indian nodded.

"I might have known it," declared Norman. "I'll bet there's mighty little around those camps that escapes your eyes. Now I'll tell you what we want, Sol," he continued, hurriedly. "Fred and I rather look for the Windigo again to-night. If he comes we'll cut him off at our end of the camp. You cut him off at your end, and we'll have him trapped between the fires and the lake front. It won't be much of a trick then to wake up the men, and run him down."

"Me be dere," said the Indian, briefly.

"All right," returned Norman, much gratified, as he rose to leave him. "We'll depend on you then."

He related his interview with the Indian to Fred Warner, as they returned to camp. "Tell you what," he exclaimed, in high glee, "there will be something doing to-night if Mr. Windigo puts in an appearance."

"I rather guess so, too," agreed Warner.

While Norman managed to keep himself busy during the remainder of the day, going with Fred Warner when he carried out the 12 and 2.30 o'clock lunches, the day was, nevertheless, a long one, and it was with no little satisfaction that he watched the lengthening shadows merge themselves in the dusk of evening. It had been a strenuous day for the crew, for Billy Eustace knew full well the art which enables the successful boss to get from his men the very best service that is in them. Still, even the long day with its hard and exacting tasks, its constant demands upon brain and brawn, had not wholly robbed them of their ebullient spirits. There is always a wealth of recuperation for jaded bodies in a woods atmosphere, and the life in the open.

The men were early to bed that night, and before nine o'clock the long measured breathing from the camps indicated that every one was asleep. Appearances, however, are often deceitful. Two members of the crew at least were very wide awake.

"I'm afraid he won't come to-night," whispered Norman, regretfully, as ten o'clock came and went with no sign of the ghostly visitor. "There's Barney O'Connor fixing up the fires," he added, as the form of the Irishman appeared in the firelight carrying an armful of wood.

The big blaze shot up towards the sky, lighting up the little clearing and the near surface of the lake with

a brightness that threw the surrounding shadows into sharper contrast.

"It's funny," whispered Norman, "but I have heard scarcely any of those noises I heard when I was awake the first night."

"You won't," returned Fred. "It's only when you are keeping awake alone that those will come to you. There is always a crowd when you're talking to Mother Nature."

"Sh-h," warned Norman, in an excited whisper. "There he comes!"

There was no mistaking it. Moving with slow and solemn tread along the front of the camps, in the space between the fires and the lake shore, was the bent and decrepit form of 'Poleon Caron's Windigo.

Norman and Fred watched his weird figure with fascinated interest. Slowly he moved down the front of the camps until he came opposite them and then, turning abruptly, retraced his measured way in the same impressive manner.

"Now!" whispered Norman, when the aged figure had reached a point between the two camps. He rose carefully and made his way softly out of the camp, closely followed by his companion.

"Where's Sol?" whispered Fred, as they reached the space between the camp-fires and the lake.

"I don't see him," returned Norman, anxiously. "I hope he hasn't overslept."

"Sh-h," said Warner.

The Windigo had paused in a listening attitude. Evidently satisfied after a moment that all was well, he resumed his march.

The boys were slowly following him up, when Norman incautiously stepped upon a dead limb. The Windigo wheeled upon them sharply, and pointed a long, glowing finger in their direction, then seeing that they were following him undismayed, he suddenly straightened up, dropped his staff, and fled from them like a frightened deer.

"Hi there! Hold on there!" they shouted as they raced after him.

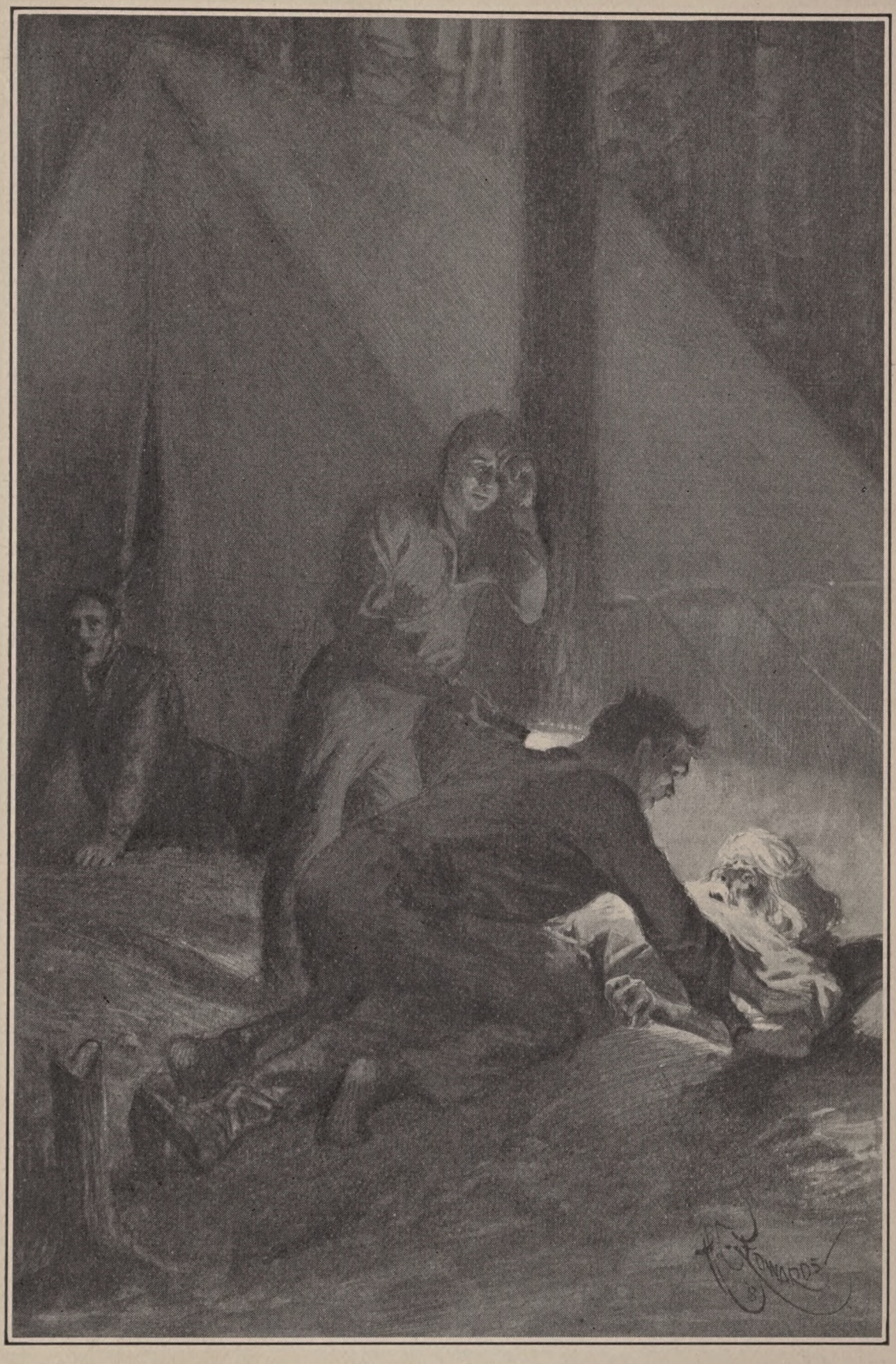
It was evident, however, that the Windigo was a sprinter of no mean ability. He dashed away from them with an astonishing burst of speed, and soon reached the end of the farther camp.

"He'll make the woods! He'll get away!" gasped Norman.

His fears were groundless, however. As the Windigo turned to make for the woods, a tall form dashed around the end of the camp, and clasped the weird and ghostly apparition in his arms. At the same time the captor gave vent to a triumphant war-whoop that brought the men of the crew leaping from their beds in a tumult of excitement.

For a moment the Windigo struggled furiously, but hopelessly, in the powerful arms of Sol Soc.

"Giveum up?" grunted the Indian, as the members of the crew gathered around him.



FOR A MOMENT THE WINDIGO STRUGGLED FURIOUSLY BUT HOPELESSLY.—*Page 76.*

"Sure Moike!" said the Windigo, good-naturedly. "It's captured Oi am. I surrinder."

"Barney O'Connor!" came in chorus from the astonished members of the crew at the first sound of the Irishman's rich brogue. There was a roar of laughter, in which even shame-faced 'Poleon Caron joined feebly. He foresaw the chaffing he would have to endure from his companions, but at the same time he found a large measure of recompense in the sudden relief from his fears.

With his disguise upon his arm, Barney O'Connor stood laughing in the midst of his captors. His outfit was a simple one, consisting of a sheet, the half of a broken pickpole, and a wig and beard made with considerable skill from the hempen strands of a piece of new rope which the ingenious Irishman had evidently pulled apart for that purpose.

"I couldn't hilp it. Me spirit was willin'; but me flesh was wake," said O'Connor to Eustace, who stood on the outer edge of the circle regarding him with very evident displeasure.

"I thought we were here to drive logs," said the boss, coldly.

"Arrah! but we'll droive 'em all right," returned Barney. "Sure a little fun now an' thin will ile up the jints of the min."

"You mighty near oiled some of them off the drive," growled Eustace, unappeased. "He's played horse with you. What are you going to do with him?"

"Geeve heem ole codfeesh!" "Souse him!" "Ride him on a pole!" were some of the suggestions shouted by the men in response to this question.

The idea of a ducking seemed to appeal with special force to the men. Strong hands were laid upon Barney, and he was borne, struggling and squirming, to the shore, and thrown headlong into the cold waters of the lake.

"Oi've had me dance an' paid the fiddler," he said, philosophically, as he sat before the fire, drying his wet clothes, after he had waded ashore. "Sure Oi'm thot tinder av ye thot Oi rickon Oi'll stay oop this noight an' kape the fires goin' for ye."

"There's one thing I'd very much like to know, Barney," said Norman, pausing beside him.

"What's thot, me bye?"

"How did you get that fiery finger?"

The Irishman looked at him with twinkling eyes.

"A little phosphorus will do wondthers on a dark noight," he said.

CHAPTER VII

NORMAN TRIES SPIKE-SOLE SHOES

"We'll have to warp 'em."

The crew was eating breakfast in the first glow of the dawn the morning following the capture of the Windigo, as the men had promptly named the rollicking Barney O'Connor. It was very evident that weather conditions were not to the liking of Eustace as he gave voice to this opinion.

"Why?" asked Norman, vaguely. He did not know just what the boss meant by "warping" logs.

"There isn't much wind," sighed Eustace, "and what little there is of the contrary kind — blowing to the East. We'll lose that pretty soon. It's going to rain."

"Rain?" echoed Norman, in a tone of dismay.

"Sure," responded Eustace, with conviction. "It's in the air."

"Shure it will give us more wather for drivin'," said Barney O'Connor, cheerfully.

Norman felt depressed. One fair day had succeeded another thus far since they had left Patten, and, if Eustace were a weather prophet, they were now about to suffer the discomforts of a stormy one.

"You'll have to get down the head-works and boom, Barney," he said, turning to O'Connor. "You'll find them tied up in that little cove back of Willow Neck. I was in hopes we could start the whole procession on a South wind."

"Shure ye can't have everything come a-chasing yer own way all the toime," returned the Irishman, good-naturedly. "Now and again ye must be afther missin' it entoirely, or pullin' it along by the ear."

"That's about what we'll have to do to-day," said Eustace.

Shortly after the men tramped away to their work in the faint glow of the morning. At 9.30 o'clock Norman assisted Fred Warner in carrying lunches to the men at work on the fast vanishing landing.

"Billy will have to move his logs with head-works to-day," said Warner, as they tramped along together.

"Head-works?" returned Norman. "I thought he said he was going to warp them."

"It's the same thing," explained Fred. "You'll see for yourself a little later when we come up with the men. I reckon they'll just about be getting the first boom under way."

When the two boys reached the landing they found that Fred had been right in his prediction, for the boom of logs was already on its way down the lake. It was a large field of loose logs, enclosed all around by a big loop of logs fastened together at the ends to make them continuous. Logs thus fastened together

and used to fence in other logs are always known as a boom.

"That raft in front with the capstan is the head-works," explained Fred Warner.

The raft to which Warner had directed Norman's attention, and to which the boom of logs was securely fastened by a short, stout warp, was a substantial-looking structure. It was made of cross-piled logs, carefully hewn in order that their edges might fit closely together, and was three logs in thickness. On this raft, or, as it is commonly called by drivers, "head-works," was a big log spool or capstan, revolving around a central shaft, and very similar to those used for the handling of anchors on ships, save that it stood considerably higher. In the top of this big capstan was a row of mortised holes into which were inserted the ends of the long bars used by the men in turning it. Attached to the capstan was a long and powerful warp, at the opposite end of which was a three-hundred-pound anchor. This anchor was carried in a batteau down the lake the length of the long warp, and thrown into the water. The men then returned to the big raft or head-works and manned the capstan bars. Moving round and round in a big circle, they slowly wound up the long warp, moving the head-works and the boom of logs attached to it down the lake towards the anchor. When this was reached it was pulled up from the bottom of the lake, the warp was unwound from the capstan, and once more the heavy anchor was carried

down the lake to furnish a new pull hold for the headworks.

"Looks to me like pretty slow business," was Norman's comment, after he had watched the work for some time.

"It's slow but sure," responded Fred. "You must remember, however, that, in a very famous race of olden times, the tortoise beat the hare."

"But the monotony of it!" exclaimed Norman.

"It's very nearly as exciting as treading a threshing machine or turning a grindstone," responded Fred, with a laugh. "I can tell you one other thing it is and no mistake," he added, in a more serious tone. "It comes pretty near being mighty hard work. If you don't believe it, just try it yourself sometime."

Norman laughed.

"I'm quite willing to take your word for it," he said.

"Of course in our case here the distance is not long," continued Fred. "With any kind of luck the boys will have that boom of logs tied up at the dam before supper time, but on the bigger lakes warping logs is a good deal more of a proposition. Men have been known to work at it three days and nights at a stretch."

"I should think it would kill them," said Norman.

"Well, it is something of a strain on human endurance," admitted Fred, "but these men are tough. If they were not, they wouldn't be on the drive."

Norman was strangely silent on the return to the camp, and Warner, noticing that he was preoccupied, forbore to break in upon the current of his reflection.

"I believe I can do it."

Norman broke out abruptly and somewhat emphatically with this expression of faith. Warner looked up at him with quick interest.

"I reckon you've got the fever," he said, dryly.

"What fever?"

"You want to try the logs with spike-sole shoes," returned Fred, confidently.

Norman looked surprised and annoyed.

"How did you guess?" he asked.

"Oh, I recognized the symptoms," returned Fred, easily. "Every new man has 'em, sooner or later. There's only one cure."

"What's that?"

"Get a pair of spike-sole shoes, and try it out."

"That's just what I'm going to do," confided Norman. "There's a pair of those shoes in the wangan that will just fit me. I tried them on this morning. I think I'll buy them, and see what I can do in them."

"Better do it when the men aren't round," admonished Fred.

"I'd thought about that," returned Norman. "There's an old log in the cove beyond the camp, and I thought I'd practise up a bit on that. This is one of my easy days, and I might as well make it count."

Arriving at the camp Norman lost no time in putting his new plan into execution, and arrayed in his heavy new driving shoes he made his way to the cove, his wrought calks scraping with metallic ring upon the stones along the way. He carried a pickpole over his shoulder, and, although beginning to be somewhat dubious about his abilities, was determined not to retire without giving his self-imposed task a thorough trying out.

He was relieved to find his log still lodged in the willows of the cove, and near it another, which had evidently drifted in during the night. He walked to the further end of the larger of the two, and, using his pickpole, pushed it out upon the water. Once afloat he ran back and forth upon it with a feeling of exhilaration. The spikes of his heavy shoes gave him a sureness of footing that inspired him with confidence. After poling his log about for a few minutes, and keeping his balance far better than he had supposed he would be able to, he was encouraged to take greater hazards. He began to feel that, after all, the river driver's art wasn't half the knack that the experts would make it appear. With a little more practice he would show them a thing or two himself, and wouldn't they be surprised!

He returned to the shore, and, pushing the second log into the cove, amused himself for a time by leaping from one to the other, using his pickpole, with its pointed end firmly bedded on the bottom of the lake,

for a vaulting pole. He had performed this feat successfully several times, and was about to repeat it when a most unexpected mishap befell him. His pickpole stuck in a soft place in the lake bottom and failed to respond quickly to his jump. He hung for a moment, suspended in air, and then, failing to make the second log, fell with a mighty splash into the water.

As he came to the surface a roar of laughter greeted him from the shore, and he looked up with a sickly smile of chagrin to see the convulsed faces of Fred Warner and Felix Lamarre watching him from the willows.

"You'd better look out!" he shouted, good-humoredly, as he recovered his pickpole and waded ashore with it. "I've given you a good two-ringed circus, and now I'm going to take up a collection."

"You mustn't mind us," said Fred Warner, in a mollifying tone. "Really you did wonderfully well, but you looked so comical, and had such a wild expression on your face when you went under, that we couldn't help laughing at you."

"Dat wan grande, smart treeck," declared the giggling Felix. "I t'ink you mak' wan mos' smart driver."

"I sha'n't give it up — that's one thing certain," declared Norman, grimly, as he followed them back to the camp.

"Good boy!" said Felix, approvingly. "You ban got ver' moch spunk."

"You needn't feel down at the heel, Norman," declared Fred Warner, encouragingly. "I've seen more than one greenhorn that didn't succeed in riding even one log the first time trying, let alone two. You did too well, and got too ambitious."

"Verily, pride goeth before a fall," returned Norman, solemnly. "I hope the men won't learn of this," he added, with some anxiety.

"They won't through me," declared Warner.

"Ba golly! I don' tell heem," added Felix.

"Thanks," said Norman, heartily. "I don't want them chaffing me now. A little later I'll take my chances with them. I know I can do it — with a little more practice."

"I've no doubt of it," replied Fred Warner, confidently. "You take to it like a duck to water."

"I gass nex' time you show de boys wan t'ing or mebbe two or tree," supplemented Felix.

Norman laughed.

"Shure, an' ye flatther me!" he said, imitating the rich brogue of Barney O'Connor. "Eustace was a false prophet," he added, with a glance at the sky. "The sky is clearing. It isn't going to rain after all."

He seated himself on a cracker box beside the cook's fire, and proceeded to dry out his wet clothing so that when the time came to take out the noon lunches to the men he was able, by exchanging his steaming coat for his woods sweater, to accompany Fred Warner without exciting any comment.

Norman was not a boy to be discouraged easily. The following day he renewed his practice upon the logs in the cove, and speedily developed a skill and confidence that made him anxious to try it out with the men; but for a time no opportunity was afforded for him to do so. The big landing of logs was started on its long journey to the mills on the Penobscot, and camp and cook were forced to keep in close and constant touch with its progress.

The first move was down Sebois Grand Lake to Snowshoe Lake, and across this beautiful sheet of water with its wild woods setting, to the head of White Horse Lake which was connected with it by a short thoroughfare whose sluggish waters afforded, at freshet pitch, an excellent opportunity for log driving. It became necessary for the crew to "carry" the big batteaux around the dam at the foot of Sebois Grand Lake, and, though the distance was short, Norman had an opportunity to discover for himself that the task was not an easy one, and to understand why the men of a drivng crew have such an aversion to this particular duty.

The contents of the big boats were first carried around the dam to the point where the heavy craft were to be launched again. The bulky articles, like barrels of pork and flour, were tied to the big oars. The ends of these were shouldered by the men, and the load thus suspended carried slowly around the dam. It was at best a slow and tedious process. This moving

of the big driving boats and their contents is known to the drive as "carrying wangan," an experience that was new to Norman, but one with which he was destined to become very familiar in the next few weeks.

When the big batteaux were emptied of their contents, they were dragged on shore and turned bottom up.

"Arrah, an' it's lucky for us it's a short portage; but be th' heavins it's a moighty mane job luggin' boat at best," declared Barney O'Connor. "Now lay to it, me byes! Aisy there! Aisy wid ye!" The big boat, weighing over eight hundred pounds, was lifted upon the shoulders of twelve men, one at the bow, one at the stern, and five on either side, and moved leisurely down the descent towards the waters below the dam. As it made its slow, laborious way, with the spike-sole shoes of the men ploughing up the earth, and ringing sharply against the rocks, as they slipped and staggered along with their heavy burden, the big boat looked to Norman for all the world like a monster turtle feeling his uncertain way across the landscape. There was a sigh of relief from the men when they deposited it at the water's edge below the dam, wiped their perspiring faces, and gave vent to their feelings in amazing expectorations of tobacco juice.

"Bedad, this is the divil's own job," declared Barney O'Connor, voicing the general opinion. "It's makin' a mule av a man; thot's what it is."

"I gass dat ban rat," responded one of the men.

"Give me a try at it," requested Norman.

"Begorra an' it's a volunteer that we hov!" exclaimed Barney. "An' did ye iver hear the loikes o' thot, byes? I reckon as any av us wud be willin' for to swap places wid ye, hey byes?" he added, turning to the grinning men.

"You're very kind," laughed Norman.

"Sure, an' it's a good stout bye ye are," continued Barney, looking Norman over with a critical eye, "an' I guess on the whole it's the bow we'll be afther lettin' ye take."

"I'll try it," returned Norman, "but you must remember I'm green at it. Don't try to play horse with me."

"We'll be afther usin' ye as tinder as a new-born babe," assured Barney.

"And that's tender enough for any one," declared Norman.

They made their way to the shore above the dam and shouldered the second batteau.

As they slowly moved forward with it, Norman was conscious that he had undertaken a task of no small magnitude. The bow of the big boat rested heavily upon his shoulder as they went down the hill. All at once he felt that his load was over-riding him. He strove desperately to brace himself by digging the spikes of his shoes into the soft earth. For a few minutes he held his own.

"Easy!"

"Steady there!"

"Howld hard, me bye!" came encouragingly from the members of the crew.

Norman struggled manfully, but in going over the rounded brow of a ledge the big boat suddenly seemed to surge down upon him with all its weight; his feet, despite his utmost efforts, slipped from under him, and, losing his uncertain hold upon the batteau, he fell sprawling to the ground, amid the loud guffaws of the men. Very red in the face, he picked himself up and resumed his place.

"Good pluck, me lad!" called Barney O'Connor, encouragingly.

The big boat suddenly seemed to be growing lighter and he reached the water below the dam without further mishap.

"I'm initiated," he exclaimed, with a sigh of relief, as the boat was deposited at the water's edge. "One thing is certain," he added, with sudden suspicion, as he glanced at the broadly grinning faces of the men, "either I lugged a part of your load at the first of that trip, or you lugged a part of mine the last of it."

A roar of laughter greeted this statement. Barney O'Connor looked at him with twinkling eyes.

"It's not me thot wud be denyin' thot she surged a little whin we was a-goin' over thot lidge," he said, reflectively. "Yes, indade, she surged," he added, solemnly.

"I suspected as much," said Norman, dryly — a

reply that called forth another gust of uproarious laughter from the men.

"Wid the practice ye've had it's betther ye'll do nixt toime," said Barney, consolingly. "It's enough onyway thot ye've done for one day an' shure there's no feller here thot fails to appreciate it."

"Thanks!" responded Norman, good-naturedly.

"I didn't know as you'd see it," said Fred Warner, when the men had returned above the dam.

"I didn't see it. I felt it," returned Norman. "Still at best that batteau is no feather bed."

"The two-streakers are much lighter."

"And what's a two-streaker?" demanded Norman.

"It's a batteau with only two boards to a side," returned Warner. "These we are using you'll notice have three. They are called Maynards after the name of the man who first made them. Six men can lug a two-streaker, but it takes a double crew to handle a Maynard with any sort of comfort. Still I've heard men say that they'd just as soon handle a Maynard with twelve men as a two-streaker with six men. The big boats carry so much more that it takes a less number of them to a crew, and they are much better rough-water boats."

A little later they were on their way down to Snowshoe Lake, not far from the foot of which, in a favorable spot near a good spring of water, they pitched the big tents, and made a new camp.

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE LOWER SEBOIS

The days that followed the first moving of the camp were strenuous ones for hard-working Billy Eustace and the men of his crew. They toiled from dawn to dusk with feverish energy. Eustace himself appeared to be the very incarnation of restless, driving force. He was at his work early and late, urging the men to constantly greater efforts. Haste, hustle, hurry, were the words most frequently upon his lips. He made the crew feel, in a hundred subtle ways, that he was secretly proud of their skill and daring; and they justified his confidence with a reckless, almost unconscious, courage and vigor, that stamped them as efficient men in their dangerous calling. The word went forth that the water was surely falling, and the brook drives must all be run into the main river while yet the high water of the spring freshet made it possible, and the men responded with enthusiasm to the demands of the situation, working through the lengthening hours of daylight in a very abandon of effort. Their feet were never dry, and great slashes had been cut in the toes of their spike-sole shoes to let out the water that was constantly filling them.

As the falling water made his task more formidable Eustace became morose and taciturn, except when giving his sharp, crisp orders to the men. Seemingly he never rested, and the drive, drive, drive of his dauntless spirit seemed constantly to keep the members of the crew at the highest possible tension.

"If one would maintain the upper hands of a situation like this he must make himself something of a pirate," explained the boss to Norman confidentially one morning, as they sat together upon a boulder eating breakfast. "Must make every man in the crew feel that you think he's a little smarter than any of the rest of them, and in a large measure personally responsible for the success of the drive. At the same time each one of them must be persuaded fully that you are wrought up to the killing point; that you are fairly thirsting for blood, and that you'd just as soon it would be his as any other man's."

"You've certainly got them going all right," said Norman.

"I'm glad we're getting rid of the brook drives," continued Eustace, in a tone of relief. "Those are what make a man's hair grow gray, for if you fail to take advantage of the freshet pitch the chances are that you've lost those logs unless, of course, an unusually heavy rain comes along to help you out. Even then it's ten to one that you don't have to go back for 'em. I like to clean up a drive as I go along. I tell the boys not to hesitate to chop in two a few logs on the

brook drives wherever it will save time. I'd rather do it than take chances of hanging up the season's cut."

"But where you have to cut up a log in driving, does it necessarily follow that you lose by it?" asked Norman.

"Yes, to some extent always," returned Eustace. "Two short logs are never as valuable as one long one at the mill, and, moreover, where two logs are made from one in driving it isn't always possible to put the company's mark on the second one, although we always endeavor to do so when practicable."

"What becomes of the unmarked logs on a drive?" asked Norman.

"Such logs become what are known as 'prizes,'" explained Eustace. "They are taken out at the sorting booms and sold, the sum realized from them being divided among the operators in the proportion that their various cuts bear to the whole number of logs included in the drive."

"So it isn't all loss," said Norman.

"Not if you don't contribute more than your fair share of the prize logs," returned Eustace. "A real careful operator will invariably profit from the shiftlessness of a careless one."

Day followed day during this period of the drive with little to break their monotony. There was a general sigh of relief when the last brook drive was finally joined to the main drive, and on its way down the Sebois river.

"We didn't get 'em in a minute too soon," declared Eustace to Norman. "The water's been falling steadily, and I've expected to get pinched on at least part of them. For once luck was with me. Talk about Chamberlain Lake waters!" he added, with apparent conviction. "If we didn't have them there wouldn't be water enough in the East Branch to-day to float ducks," and having finished his meal, Eustace hurried away to urge on the men to greater endeavors.

It was no easy task to maintain the camp within easy reach of the crew during these bustling days, and Norman was kept very busy, along with his other work, in assisting Fred and Felix in taking down the big tents, transporting them to new sites, and setting them up again. These various journeys in the big Maynards gave him a certain amount of confidence in the handling of a batteau. He also improved his opportunities for practising on the logs in spike-sole shoes, with such good results that when he finally appeared in them among the men he was able, very much to their surprise, to acquit himself with a skill that commanded their respect, some of them even going so far as to predict that he would make "a mighty smart driver."

One beautiful morning in early June the men of the crew made their appearance at Larry Hunt's place, poling their big batteaux along the dead water and drawing them out on the pebbly shore above the dam. Through the sluiceway that ran from the little pond,

and which extended under the bridge that crossed the Sebois just below the dam, the brown-faced, perspiring drivers were pushing a continuous line of logs with their long pickpoles.

There was a gate at the head of the sluiceway. This could be closed down, and used to hold back the water. It was open, however, when the wangan boat reached Hunt's place, and a sufficient flow of water was running in the sluiceway to float easily the logs that were being sent through it. At the head of the sluiceway were several floating timbers which by an ingenious device could be pulled quickly across the current at the opening and as effectually prevent the passage of any logs as would the shutting down of the gate itself. This was called a "trip" and its object was to shut off the running of the logs, when the flag or signal men stationed along the shores on ledgy promontories or the giant boulders that studded the sides of the river bed, notified the men above the dam that some of the logs had caught and were obstructing the river. This prevented the running of any more logs until those which had lodged in the channel below were cleared away and sent upon their journey, leaving the river once more free from obstruction. In this way it was possible to avoid, on a boisterous stretch of white water, the "jams" that would, otherwise, have delayed the progress of the drive, and which would have added very largely to the danger and expense of handling it.

When the men below the dam had straightened the refractory logs the trip was opened again, and once more the fallen giants of the forest were permitted to run through the sluiceway on their way to the Penobscot. Some of the signal men were plainly seen by Norman as he stood upon the bridge and looked down into the wild, rocky gorge through which the roaring river rushed with seething current and driving spray.

By watching the signals and observing the men above the dam operate their trip in response to them, he soon discovered that the display of a white flag by the signal men, meant "Go ahead. The channel's clear," while the waving of a red flag meant "Close the trip, a jam is forming."

Larry Hunt saved them a hard task by moving their batteaux around the dam and bridge on a long sled drawn by two strong horses, and soon after they were encamped upon a gentle, sloping bluff far above the foamy bed of the river. A little later Norman and Fred made their way down a steep ravine to the edge of the water to serve the men with their 9.30 lunch. Norman was confident that he detected a distinct atmosphere of elation among them, which he instinctively felt was due to their enjoyment of the greatly increased hazards of their work. At length they had reached "white water" where strength and daring would test their mettle, and every day's work would be a tournament with death. The battle was on and all were alive with its exhilaration. They were, too, imbued with

the militant spirit; they were men, in the apt language of Mrs. Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, "whose armed heels smote the rock, whose peavies jangled a battle hymn."

After the return to camp from the distribution of the forenoon lunches, Norman strolled along the high banks for a further view of the wild glories of the river. Presently he emerged from a clump of fir-trees and stood upon the broad flat top of a giant cliff, whose seamy front leaped away in almost sheer descent for several hundred feet to the yeasty current below. There was a small tent pitched upon the brow of this rocky promontory, in front of which blazed a small fire. The place jutted well out into the river basin, affording an excellent view up and down its turbid waters. Near the outer edge of this high crest a hole had been drilled in the rock into which a staff was stuck upon which floated a white flag.

Another staff bearing a red flag lay close at hand upon the rock. Standing back to him beside the flying flag was a man, closely watching the progress of the logs as they went racing along in the angry current.

Norman was about to speak to him, when the man turned and saw him. With a shout of pleasure he came forward to meet him, and Norman perceived with amazement that he was old Jim Benner.

"Norman Carver, or I am a liar!" exclaimed the veteran joyfully as he wrung his hand. "Knew ye was on the drive. Ben a watchin' for ye to come along for th' last three days," he declared, with very

evident satisfaction, his weather-beaten face wreathed in smiles.

"But I wasn't expecting to see you, Jim," said Norman. "In fact I don't know when I was ever more surprised. The last time I saw you was in the hospital at Aerie Lake."

"They couldn't keep me there, though," returned Benner, with an accent of pride. "I'm too tough. If I hadn't ben thet 'ere fiend of a Kelty would a-finished me up for sartin sure. Thet's jest what he laid out t' do."

"No doubt of it; and I was afraid one time that he'd accomplished his purpose," declared Norman.

"Came 'bout as nigh it es any one ever did and fail," said Benner, with conviction. "Found things a little tiresome, hey?" questioned the veteran, with a smile.

"It's been a good deal like work," admitted Norman; "but I've been too busy thus far to get homesick."

"A feller will allus be thet on the drive," said Benner, sagely. "Billy gin me this 'ere job, because it comes nigher bein' a snap than anything else. If it hadn't ben I reckon es how I'd never held it down," he added, with a sigh of regret. "My wound is all healed up nicely; but I've ben a leetle slow a-gettin' back my strength. You'll enjoy things now a good deal better," he added, with an abrupt change of subject.

"Do you think so?" asked Norman.

"Sartin sure," returned Benner, confidently. "You've reached some real white water now, my boy. From here to th' East Branch are a number o' deep river gorges, which'll call for some pretty lively drivin'. Th' boys'll be on their mettle from this time forth, an' Billy will be a mighty lucky man if he gets out of the Sebois without a jam or two."

"We've been very fortunate in that respect so far," returned Norman. "We have had one or two small pile-ups; but nothing as yet that we couldn't start without any very serious trouble."

"There used to be some awful jams in this very gorge," returned Benner, "but since they built th' dam an' trip, an' fixed up the signal stations, they manage to get through here in pretty fair shape. Now an' then there's a mix-up; but we shut off the logs above the dam at once an' gin the men a chance t' clean it up before it gits very big."

"This is certainly grand," said Norman, looking down the rocky gorge, through which the river, swollen with the contributions of its tributaries, went roaring down to the East Branch on its ceaseless journey to the sea. It was a wild, tempestuous torrent, now churning itself madly over rugged barriers, now leaping high in air in frothy protest against an obstructing ledge or boulder, now racing madly down some rocky declivity with exultant roar, its waters gleaming in the sunlight like clouds of amber flecked with white.

"Makes us think that man is a pretty small critter atter all when we look out on any part o' Natur' that gins a notion o' the majesty o' God," said Benner, solemnly. "I've thought 'bout thet a good many times sence I've ben a-roostin' here."

"Think of the enormous power that runs to waste there!" said Norman, in awed tone.

"Lots on it," returned Benner. "But, bless ye, only a very small part on it shows from here. This stretch o' swift water is called the 'Horse Race.' Below there is a short stretch o' water cavortin' over big boulders thet's known es 'Little Tiger.' There never was one as could ride a log or run a boat through there."

"I should think they'd come here in the fall when the water was low, and blow the boulders out of the channel," said Norman.

"Bless ye, son! They've spent thousands o' dollars a-doin' o' thet very thing," said Benner. "Do a little every year; it's a-gettin' better all th' time, but there's a powerful lot o' rocks left yet 'tween here an' th' East Branch an' is liable t' be for some years 't come."

"What comes after Little Tiger?" asked Norman.

"Well, there's 'The Jaws' — two big boulders that jut out o' th' bank on opposite sides o' th' river. They come so nigh together that they narrer up th' channel at thet pint and make the current there go 'long faster'n th' tail end of a mill race. Late years they've gin'ally kept a signal man on both the jaws,

for if a jam should form there it would cost a big wad o' money t' pick it. Th' company has found out by exper'ence that a couple o' pickpoles, an' a few dollars' wuth of elbow grease t' operate 'em, is a mighty good investment at thet pint."

"Are there other bad places?" asked Norman.

"Yes, there's a long stretch o' quick rough water called 'Big Tiger.' Then there's Godfrey Pitch, where th' water takes a consider'ble tumble. One o' th' very wust places on th' river, although it isn't more'n a fifth of a mile long. 'Bout th' wust of 'em all, though, is Grand Pitch. It's all white water there. There air big rock cliffs on either side, an' th' water runs like a race hoss. No boat ever went over thar with any one in it, though I've hearn tell es how they sent one over empty once, and she came through all right. Must ha' ben suthin of a mericle, I reckon. No duck ever swam Grand Pitch."

"I should think they were lucky to be able to fly it," was Norman's comment.

"Well, good-bye," said Benner, as his visitor turned to go. "See ye et supper. My strong holt never was cookin', though I've managed t' bone along here a day or two. The rest o' th' boys here got their meals at Hunt's; but they was a-workin' in shifts an' I couldn't very well leave. It was a mighty good investment for Billy t' send 'em on ahead. Larry feeds mighty well, still it will seem a little like old times t' git some o' Felix Lamarre's grub agin."

"Don't they let any logs through the sluiceway after dusk?" asked Norman.

"Nary a log," returned Benner. "They couldn't see t' handle 'em if they did, so they jest shut down th' gates o' th' dam an' let th' pond fill up over night. Thet gins 'em a good head o' water t' begin work with in th' mornin'. They get along a good deal faster a-workin' it thet way. Th' water hes been fallin' off."

"But see how rough it is," protested Norman.

"Jest another proof o' what I said," declared Benner. "Th' water's allus roughest on a fallin' pitch."

As Norman was returning to camp, he came upon Eustace and a number of the men in the act of "dog-warping" a small jam. There was no mistaking the key-log which, wedged in between four boulders, lay at right angles across the current, and effectually hung up the logs behind it. Fortunately the signal man had secured the prompt closing of the trip at the dam so that the accumulation was neither a formidable one, nor in danger of growing larger.

Sol Soc had carried the end of the long warp out to the refractory key-log, into which he had with a few mighty swings of his axe driven the sharpened nose of the steel "dog" to which it was attached.

He then raced to the end of the log in his spike-sole shoes, and, planting his long pickpole on the river bed, vaulted nimbly ashore.

"Are you ready?" called Eustace, impatiently.

"Goum 'head," returned Sol.

Norman joined Eustace and the men in a mighty pull upon the long warp.

"Lay to it, boys," roared the boss. "Steady there! Now, all together."

The men settled back upon the rope for a lusty tug when suddenly the dog which attached it to the log gave way and sent them sprawling to the ground. They picked themselves up with a laugh at their bumped heads. Sol, seeing the mishap, was already back upon the log again with the dog.

"Bring the warp more this way," shouted Eustace, "and set your dog a little further under the log."

Sol nodded assent. A moment later the crew pulled again with better success.

"There she hauls," shouted Eustace, and even as he spoke the key-log slipped over a confining boulder, swung endwise into the current, and resumed its journey towards the East Branch, while Sol with some prompt and skilful work with his pickpole sent the logs that had lodged against it following in its wake.

THE BEGINNING OF A JAM. — *Page 104.*

CHAPTER IX

NORMAN BREAKS THE BIG JAM

"It's the unexpected that always happens!"

Eustace was evidently depressed and annoyed. "I set out to put a man at that very place to prevent a jam from forming; but the water has been so good that it didn't seem possible for any logs to get hung up there. It seems however that there were two little stretches of mushroom ledge just under the water there that I didn't take into account. They're holding the key-log at either end. If it could be cut in the center it would slide out between them."

"Is it a bad jam?" asked Norman, to whom Eustace had confided this situation.

"Yes," responded the boss, grimly. "Right there at the head of Grand Pitch, the most dangerous place to work on the whole river. The logs are bunged in there fiercely; ricked up like a heap of jackstraws. It's the worst place to work in the whole river. High ledgy shores, and a rough, crooked channel — down hill for a long stretch an' all white water! Couldn't find a meaner place on the Sebois to be hung up in."

"It must be dangerous to work in," suggested Norman.

"Dangerous!" echoed Eustace. "Well, I should say so. Any man who tries to break that jam will take his life in his hand. There's only one redeeming thing about it. We know the key-log. It isn't always easy to locate them; but this time there isn't any doubt about it. When that jam hauls, she's going out mighty lively."

"Have you tried dynamite?" asked Norman.

"Yes. We fiddled around with it most of yesterday afternoon. Used charge after charge; but couldn't seem to spin a thread."

"Some one has got to cut that key-log," said Norman.

"I don't see any other way out of it," declared Eustace, gloomily. "I don't like to ask one of the men to do it. It's like signing his death warrant. That key-log is strained up like a bow now and I've been hoping that the pressure of the water and logs behind it might break it; but there's no such luck. You can always depend upon a spruce log to hold tough when you don't want it to."

"I suppose the boys can work 'em off the top," suggested Norman.

"Yes," assented Eustace, "but that way of getting at it is both slow and dangerous. It's considerably more than likely that when the weight of the other logs is taken off that key-log she'll float clear of the ledges that hold her, and go down the pitch with a rush. If she's cut — and it wouldn't take but a few

clips with an axe to break her in two the way she's strained up — why she'd just double up in the center and slide out like a streak of greased lightning. Yes, sir, depend upon it, whenever that jam hauls from any cause whatever she's going out a-flying."

Breakfast was over and with shouldered peavies the men of the crews trooped away in the wake of Eustace. The boss was quick to notice that Norman Carver who walked beside him also wore spike-sole shoes, and carried a peavey.

"You mustn't take chances, my boy," he said, in a low tone. "There are many experienced men in the crew who have faced these dangers before and will not be afraid to do so again."

"I'm no better than any one else," returned Norman, steadily. "I want to take my share of the work and the dangers."

They emerged from the woods and walked along the shore overlooking the frothy waters of Godfrey Pitch.

A startled cry of alarm came from the men of the crew, and looking down upon the roaring river, Norman saw a sight that filled him with amazement and apprehension.

In the wild boil of the torrent, amid the flying mists and spray, a big batteau tossing like a feather upon the angry current, was speeding its swift way to what seemed certain destruction. In the stern with a big paddle in his hands sat Sol Soc, while Barney O'Con-

nor, pickpole in hand, crouched upon the bow fending off the racing craft from threatening ledges and boulders.

A groan of dismay broke from Eustace.

"The fools!" he exclaimed, bitterly. "I left them to help lower the boats over that pitch, and that's what they are doing."

"To lower the boats?"

"Yes. Hitch a long warp to them, and let them run over empty. No one ever tried to run that pitch in a boat before."

A shout of horror came from the men of the crew. A giant boulder loomed up before the big Maynard which was sliding down the foaming waters of the pitch with incredible speed.

"Dey ban loss! Dey ban drown!" shouted some of the crew in a tumult of fear.

It certainly looked as if Sol and Barney were doomed, but they were men of cool nerve as well as desperate daring. As the batteau neared the ledge O'Connor braced sharply against it with his pickpole, while with powerful strokes of his big paddle Sol helped to turn the bow of the batteau in an opposite direction. Slowly the big boat responded to this double exertion of strength, and a cheer broke from the men of the crew, as, barely grazing the obstruction that had threatened its life, it bounded on and out of sight down the river, amid the spume and the spray of the rushing waters.

Soon after Eustace and his party came to the head

of the ravine leading down a steep embankment to the foot of the pitch, and there, close against the shore in the eddying waters of a deep pool, rested the big boat with Barney and Sol in it, very much alive, and apparently in the best of spirits.

Immediately they were plied with eagerly shouted questions from the men of the crew.

"Took in l'il water; dat all," said Sol, coolly.

"Arrah, it's a foine trip we've bin afther havin'," added Barney, with enthusiasm.

"I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it," muttered Eustace. "Those boats cost money. I s'pose you had it insured," he shouted to Sol and Barney.

"Shure!" returned O'Connor, good-naturedly. "We insured it wid our loives."

"Well, you needn't insure any more of them that way," returned the boss, sharply. "Tell the boys to lower the others."

"Thot's jist what they'll be afther doin'," asserted Barney. "There wasn't another mither's son av thim thot wanted to roide this mornin'."

"I'm glad they've got a little horse sense," declared Eustace. "You'd better tie up your boat and come along with us. That's the last time I'll give those boys a chance to help lower boats," he added, to Norman. "I might known they'd tried some such caper."

"Begorra, Oi'm thinkin' we'd betther be takin' her down to the head o' Grand Pitch all ready for the carry," shouted O'Connor.

"That's right. Go ahead," returned Eustace.

A little later the crew swarmed upon the jam, pushing, pulling and prying with their peavies. A few logs were worked loose from the tangled mass and sent flying down the pitch, but it was slow and tedious work and made very little impression upon the big pile ricked up in all kinds of positions and extending from shore to shore.

"It's no use," said Eustace, gloomily. "We can never pick this jam in an eternity of years the way we've gone about it."

"Why don't you get some one to cut that key-log?" demanded Norman.

"I can't ask any one. It's too hazardous," returned Eustace. "Sol Soc or Barney will do it if I say the word, but I don't like to do it. I know that when that jam hauls there'll be no let up. She'll go out like a shot. It won't give a man much if any time to get ashore. It's the most dangerous one I ever saw."

"Why don't you bore a hole in it and use a dynamite cartridge?"

"There's no chance to use an auger. The water's too rough to work from the front, and the other logs overhang it so you can't handle an auger from the rear. It's about all you can do to reach it with a long-handled axe. You can't even cut it on the under side."

"Is that an advantage?"

"Yes. A log cut that way breaks a little more

slowly under the back pressure, and gives a man more time to reach the shore. Every second is precious at such a time. I reckon I'll take a couple of men and go back and get that rope. We'll try dog-warpin' a spell."

The boss called several of the men, and disappeared with them up the ravine that led a steep and winding way to the top of the high bank.

When he was out of hearing Norman turned briskly to the perspiring men on the jungle of logs. "Now, boys," he said, with enthusiasm, "let's surprise Billy. Let's pick this jam before he gets back."

The members of the crew leaned on their peavies for a moment and looked at him with commiserating grins.

"Ba cripe! M'sieu Carvarre, dat wan beeg job," said one.

"How you t'ink we ban do it?" demanded another.

"Cut that key-log," returned Norman, vigorously. He saw that the veteran drivers were not disposed to take him seriously, and he was nettled by it.

"Dat wan fin' t'ing for do," said Joe Landre, whimsically. "W'at mouse tie dem bell on de cat?"

A burst of uproarious laughter greeted this brilliant sally.

"I reckon, youngster, es how Billy Eustace will call for volunteers when he wants that ere log cut," said Long Tom Boggs. "When experienced men are inclined to go slow, my son, it isn't altogether

perlite for th' risin' generation to try t' rush things."

"It ban easy for sen' some fellaire w'ere you don' t'ink for go yo'se'f," remarked another.

A murmur of assent from the men followed this statement.

"De Four Honder don' hav' for go — w'en dey ban 'fraid for lose dey life," suggested a man who had hitherto remained silent.

Norman's eyes flashed resolutely. "I never would ask any one to go where I was afraid to go myself," he said, resentfully.

"Don't get warm around the collar, youngster," said Boggs, in a tone of good-natured remonstrance. "You've picked up a heap more larnin' than the rest on us in some directions; but when it comes t' river drivin' I think th' most on us has hed a mighty sight more schoolin' than you hev. Experience counts a heap in river drivin', my son."

"M'sieu Cavarre wan ver' ver' brave fellaire! Mebbe he cut dem key-log heemse'f," suggested one of the crew, in a mocking tone.

A quick flush of anger mantled Norman's face. He hotly resented the disposition of these rough men to make fun of him, or question his courage.

"I reckon he's just the one who will," he retorted, hotly. Turning angrily about, he shouldered his peavey and made his way to the shore amid the jeering laughter of the men, who were under the impression that, having failed to secure a volunteer to cut the

key-log, he was about to quit the job in disgust.

There was a distinct gasp of dismay, however, when he reappeared on the jam shortly after with an axe on his shoulder, and coolly made his way to the front of the tangled log pile.

"Hol' on! W'ere you ban gone, M'sieu Carvarre?" shouted one of the men, voicing the general consternation.

"I'm going to cut that key-log," returned Norman, grimly.

"Hol' on."

"You ban drown yo'se'f."

"Com' back, queeck."

"It's sure death t' ye, son."

There was a genuine solicitude in the voices of the men now as they urged him to give up his foolhardy project; but Norman, having fully made up his mind to cut the key-log of the jam, was not to be dissuaded from his rash purpose.

He was not insensible to the great danger of such an undertaking, but the raillery of the men, and their resentment at being offered a suggestion by him, had suddenly stirred to action all the pride and daring of his impulsive nature.

He reached the front of the jam and stood in a narrow space in the big pile which afforded the only opportunity for reaching the log he sought, and a moment later the men heard the sharp ring of his axe as he drove it into the soft wood. With pale

faces they moved towards the shore. They would at least be ready to race for safety when the jam hauled.

Again and again above the roar of the waters, they heard the sound of the axe. An ominous cracking warned Norman that it was time to go, and, dropping his axe, he leaped to the top of the jam, and raced madly along, leaping wildly from one log to another, with wonderful sureness of foot, in a desperate effort to reach the shore. He was obliged, by the manner in which the logs were ricked up along the front, to race for the rear of the jam.

There was a sound of crashing timber, followed by a mighty roar, and Norman was conscious that the logs beneath him were in motion. The big jam had suddenly hauled, and was going out, as Eustace had predicted it would, with a rush. Had Norman been nearer the front where the great logs were tumbling, rolling and up-ending into the rushing, foaming waters of the Pitch, he could not have escaped instant death. As it was his situation was in the highest degree critical, as the entire field of logs across which he was racing, as he leaped from one to another in his headlong dash for the shore, was in rapid motion, forced on towards the sweeping current of the Pitch by the great force of the waters that had gathered behind the big jam.

"Ronne queeck!"

"Hump yo'se'f!"

"Jomp hard! Sapré! Com' fas', com' fas' — you!"

The men's voices rising sharply above the grind of logs and the roar of waters, conveyed their agony of apprehension.

Norman appreciated the urgency of their call, and strove desperately to respond to it; but he was doing his best. He fully realized that he was at that moment in greater peril than ever before in his life. His pulses throbbed with a desperate courage. The wild river gorge, the racing logs, the agonized faces of the rough men upon the shore, danced across his dazed vision, like the figures in a dream. Out of the blurry haze of that intensely hurrying, over-wrought moment, came another fleeting picture that danced across his misty vision like a brief, flashing sunbeam vanishing into shadow. It showed a great batteau coming down the river. In the bow, bareheaded, with white face and hair flying in the wind, was Barney O'Connor. Crouched in the stern, his big paddle in hand and his dark eyes wild with fear, was Sol Soc. Both men were shouting something, but their voices were lost in the roar of the waters, and the thunder of pounding logs.

The logs were spreading out; they were moving faster; the jumps were longer, and Norman's balance more uncertain. The shore still looked far away. Oh, if he only had a pickpole to use as a vaulting pole! A stretch of open water loomed dark before him — beyond it lay the shore and safety. He made a mighty leap to clear it, and a groan of despair went up from

the men on the shore when they saw him fall short of it and disappear in the angry waters. A moment later they saw him rise and throw his arm over one of the smaller logs that swept along in the rear of the vanishing jam. Then he passed from sight in the angry boil, and flying spray. The men raced madly along the shore, vainly endeavoring to keep him in sight, hoping against hope, but feeling that they had looked upon him alive for the last time.

Presently they paused with a shout of amazement. Pressing closely on the rear of the whirling log field amid the raging white waters and beating spray of the Pitch, a big Maynard batteau was racing along. In the bow was Barney O'Connor, and in the stern Sol Soc.

PICKING A BIG JAM. — *Page 116.*

CHAPTER X

THROUGH THE SHADOW OF DEATH

A moment of silence fell upon the startled crew as the big Maynard swept by on the boiling current. They had been accustomed to deeds of daring from Barney O'Connor and Sol Soc, but this latest and wildest escapade of theirs, following immediately upon Norman's unlooked-for and desperate exhibition of nerve, almost took away their powers of speech.

"Ba cripe! Dey ban dead man for sure!" gasped one of the men, voicing the general verdict upon this act of reckless courage.

"Dey ban affer de boy," said another.

"He gone. Dey no fin' heem," chimed in a third.

"Saprè tonnerre!" exclaimed a fourth. "Dat boat she ban' bus' herse'f on more as ten t'ousan' pieces."

The big boat disappeared from sight around a sharp bend in the river gorge, and the men of the crew increased their speed in their race along the shore.

To Norman the cold plunge in the river was a rude shattering of his hopes. He struck out for the nearest log, and threw his arm over it. He was conscious that he was being swept along through the white water at a terrific pace. Spray filled his eyes, and choked his

breath. The log to which he was clinging rolled under him, and slipped forward under his arm. Suddenly he felt an obstruction. A steel dog with a short stretch of warp attached to it was driven in the log. He vaguely remembered of hearing some of the men tell of losing a dog in warping, while the contrary log that carried it had gone on its way to the mills to spoil some whirring rotary. To Norman, however, the incident seemed providential. He grasped the trailing piece of warp with both hands, and clung to it with the grim desperation of despair.

He was conscious of being bumped and bruised on boulders and logs as he whirled along. Occasionally some leap of the log that towed him forced his head beneath the water from which he would emerge a moment later, blinded and gasping. Then a strange lassitude overcame him. He floated away into hazy-land. Strange voices sounded afar off in his ears. He had a vague, dreamy feeling of losing his hold upon the warp, and drifting, drifting, drifting away into darkness and oblivion.

"Sthand back a little wid ye, min, an' give him all the air there is."

It was Barney O'Connor's voice that called Norman back to consciousness. He slowly opened his eyes, and looked into the dark face of Sol Soc, who was bending above him, and slowly moving his folded arms above his head and back again upon his chest to induce artificial respiration.

An exultant shout broke from the men grouped about them on the shore.

"He com' to!"

"Ba golly, he ban live for sure!"

"Hooraw! Hooraw! Dat ban beeg t'ing w'at he do."

Now that the strain was over, and the men knew that Norman would live, their attention was turned from his personal danger to his achievement. He had cut the key-log of a big jam; he had run the demon waters of Grand Pitch, and had come out alive. It was certainly a "beeg t'ing."

Scarcely less notable than the wonderful feat of Norman was the daring act of Sol Soc and Barney O'Connor, who, without a moment's hesitation, and with wonderful skill, had run their big batteau through the angry waters of the Pitch where no loaded boat had ever gone before. It was this prompt action which had saved Norman's life, enabling Barney O'Connor to drag him, in an unconscious condition, from the churning waters of a big eddy below the Pitch.

"You three fellows have broken three records on the Sebois drive," said Eustace an hour later, as he stood looking down upon Norman, who, wrapped in heavy blankets, was "sweating out" on a bough bed before a roaring camp-fire. "It was a splendid exhibition of nerve, but you must promise me that you will never undertake anything of the kind again."

"I shall probably never have another chance," returned Norman, with a laugh.

"You certainly will not if I can help it," declared Eustace, with emphasis. "And how do you feel now?" he inquired, with genuine solicitude.

"As Jim Benner would say, 'slicker'n a cup custard'," laughed Norman. "I feel a trifle sore, where I got thumped along the way, but, otherwise, I'm all right."

"I reckon you'll come round all right," said Eustace, in a tone of relief. "The boys all agree that they never saw such log running as you did after you cut that key-log. They are unanimously of the opinion that if you'd had a minute more you'd certainly have made the shore."

"And if I had I wouldn't have had the exhilarating experience of running Grand Pitch," said Norman, lightly.

"One such experience should be enough for a lifetime," declared Eustace, solemnly. "It isn't often given to a man to go through what you have experienced to-day and live to tell of it."

The day following these exciting episodes the work of the drive had once more settled into the routine of drudgery, although Norman was conscious that the men of the crew regarded him with such an increase of respect that they would no longer have resented any suggestion he might have made to them. Nowhere do the qualities of physical nerve and daring win greater prestige than among the rough men of the drive, who face death daily in constantly varying forms with a

boldness and reckless hardihood, that constantly minimizes and makes light of the hazards. Ordinary exhibitions of fortitude and pluck in the presence of ever present dangers become so common that they attract comparatively little notice, except as they serve to confer upon a driver the coveted distinction of being a good white water man. It is only now and then that an act of exceptional hazard, successfully performed, serves to give a member of a driving crew some degree of special prestige. Such an act had been performed by Norman in breaking the jam at Grand Pitch, and the hardy men of the crew cheerfully accorded him the meed of praise that was his just due, without reservation or stint.

The day following his narrow escape, Norman, though still somewhat stiff and sore from the bruises he had received, was able to accompany Fred Warner into the swamp to secure a supply of kindling wood from some suitable cedar log which had been blown down by the wind or discarded by the makers of railroad ties who had operated that section several seasons before.

Norman carried his shotgun, although, it being close time, he scarcely expected an opportunity to make use of it.

A cry of regret broke from Warner as a magnificent buck deer, frightened from his hiding place behind some old tree tops, fled swiftly down a wood-road in full view of them.

"What lots of game we see in close time," he exclaimed, a little resentfully.

Norman laughed at his friend's evident disappointment.

"I'm not altogether sure, Fred," he confessed, "that I should have taken any real satisfaction in shooting that magnificent creature."

Warner glanced at him in some perplexity.

"Why?" he asked.

"What good would it have done?"

"We could have eaten him."

"But we have enough to eat without him," said Norman.

"Of course it wouldn't have done to have shot him," admitted Warner. "It's close time and I wouldn't want you to break the law."

"You people here are bound to take the practical view of every question that comes up," said Norman.

"Why, that's the only way to look at one," declared Fred, with assurance, and Norman forbore to question the assertion.

For a time they walked along in silence, each of them feeling the charm of the deep woods, in their fullness of life, and busy with his own reflections. Suddenly Fred laid his hand on Norman's arm.

"Sh-h," he said, warningly, in a voice that trembled with excitement. "There's game you can shoot without violating the law."

Following the direction of his friend's gaze, Nor-

man perceived a small gray animal snugly ensconced in the crotch of a giant hemlock that grew part way up the slope.

"What is it?" he whispered.

"A 'coon," responded Warner. "Is your gun loaded with buckshot?"

"One barrel is."

"Let him have it. I'll stand ready to finish him with my rifle if he tries to get away after you've knocked him off his perch."

Norman took a careful aim at the raccoon and fired. Almost immediately it came tumbling out of the tree. As it struck the ground it started to run away, although it was evident that it was badly wounded. A bullet from Warner's rifle promptly put an end to its struggles.

"Oh, isn't he a beauty?" exclaimed Norman, delightedly, as he and Fred surveyed their prize with no little elation.

Warner laughed indulgently at his companion's enthusiasm.

"Well, I should hardly call him that," he said, "but he is certainly a big 'coon — about the largest one, I think, I ever saw."

"He's yours, Fred," said Norman, generously.

"No, he isn't," declared Warner, decisively. "I have no possible use for it."

"It's very kind of you to say so, and if you really mean it I should like that skin. I'll have it tanned with the head on for a rug in father's study."

"That's a good idea," assented Fred. "We'd better leave him beside the wood-road. We'll get him when we go back to camp, and I'll show you how to take off the skin and cure it. Won't Felix Lamarre's mouth water when he gets his eyes on this fellow?"

"Why, are they good to eat?" asked Norman, in surprise.

"Not specially so at this season of the year, but in the fall when they are fat, they are regarded as a great delicacy."

Continuing on their way the boys presently came to a stretch of cedar swamp in which they found a log that answered their purpose. "We'll come up here in the morning and load up the jumper," said Fred. "We sha'n't need very much. They tell me there are plenty of good dry windfalls within easy reach of our next camp site."

They returned to the camp a little later, carrying with them the 'coon which they showed to the admiring Felix.

"Ba Joe!" he commented, with a shrug of his shoulders, "jus' you t'ink w'at ver' nice firs'-rat' pie dat fellaire was mak'."

"You're welcome to try your hand at him, Felix," returned Norman, with a laugh. "I'm afraid, though, he isn't over-fat."

"He mak' wan pie wit' heem w'at mak' yo' watterre on yo' mout'," declared Felix, confidently. "Jus' yo' t'ink, he ban almos' on top dis camp."

"Almost near enough to crowd the moose-birds for the camp scraps," said Warner.

"What you do wit' hees skeen?" asked the cook.

"Why, I thought I'd fix the skin so as to keep it, and have a little rug made out of it when I go home," responded Norman.

"I t'ink it ban mos' too small," said Felix. "No hurt for try, though. Barney O'Connor was show you jus' how," he added. "He ban beeg man for tan skeen."

That evening after supper Norman took Barney aside and showed him the skin.

"Bedad an' it's not a bad wan for this toime av the year," declared the Irishman, after a critical examination.

"Felix thought you could show me how to cure it," said Norman.

"Shure," responded Barney, cordially, "but it's a sacret prociss Oi hov. Jist lave me take the skin, an' Oi'll put it in shape for ye to kape a cintury if ye loike."

"You're very kind," said Norman, gratefully.

"Don't mintion it," returned Barney, heartily, as he tucked the rolled-up skin under his coat. "It's deloighted Oi'll be to do it for ye."

The men were early to bed as the severe work of the drive was beginning to tell upon them, and Norman was at some loss to know when Barney would find time to take care of the skin. He knew, however,

that having agreed to do it, O'Connor would not fail him.

There was little jesting or story telling that night, and in a short time only a few discordant snores broke the silence of the camp.

It was in the early morning when every man was awakened with a start by a series of wild shrieks.

In the faint moonlight they perceived a half-crazed man jumping up and down before the camp in a perfect frenzy of terror.

"Here yo'!"

"Wake up!"

"What ye dreamin' erbout?" shouted the men, but their admonitions only seemed to fill the unhappy man with new fear.

"Le diable! Le diable!" he shrieked in terrified tones. "He come! He come for get Joe Landre!"

"Bosh!" said Eustace, impatiently, "what's the matter with you? What do you mean by waking up the whole camp this way?"

"Le diable was ban com' for me," groaned Landre.

"What are you talking about? You've been dreaming. You've had a nightmare."

"No — no!" protested Landre. "Le diable come. He — dere now," he added, with chattering teeth.

"Where?" demanded Eustace.

"Rat side me on de bunk." Eustace walked along to Landre's bunk and examined it critically by the light of a lantern, "There's nothing here, Joe," he

announced. "Sure it wasn't the Windigo, are you?" A loud guffaw followed this suggestion to Landre's very evident chagrin.

"You say dere ban not'ing in ma bunk?" he asked, incredulously.

"Nothing but your boughs and blankets," returned Eustace, reassuringly.

"An' sure it's nayther one av 'em will bite ye," said Barney O'Connor, scornfully. "Go back to bed wid ye, ye big woild-eyed loonatic — an' close up yer shriek-tank. Let's hear no more from ye, ye noisy spalpeen. Ye desarve to be codfished for wakin' iverybody up in the middle av the noight. Git back to bed wid ye, an' close yer yawp!"

The men sleepily seconded this demand and Landre returned to his bunk, convinced against his will that his supposed visit from the evil one was really nothing more or less than a bad dream, and once more peace and quiet reigned over the camp.

"Did Joe Landre really have a dream or did he find something uncanny in bed with him?" asked Norman of Barney O'Connor the next morning.

"Bedad, thot's a funny quistion to be askin' me," returned the Irishman, with an air of injured innocence. "Shure an' what shud I know consarnin' it? Must I be blamed for ivery mother's son in this crew thot ates too many pork an' banes, an' wakes up in the noight wid a conniption fit?"

"Certainly not," said Norman, promptly; "but you

know, Barney, that some of us imagine that you are responsible for most of the deviltry in this camp, and Joe Landre claims to have seen the devil."

"It's wrong agin, ye are," declared Barney. "He only said thot he felt 'im, which is worse, poor lad. Ah! the pity av it!"

"Right between you and me, Barney," said Norman, "what did he feel?"

"Whist! Oi'll be tellin' av ye in confidence," said the Irishman, with a quick glance around to make sure that no one was listening. "Ye see I was afther killin' all the germs on that coon av yours. It's part of the tratement, an' shure Oi cud think o' nothin' betther than to lay thot skin along soide av Joe Landre — steeped that he is wid tobac Canayen, as they call it, and let him breathe upon it and steriloize it."

"So that was the first process, was it?" laughed Norman.

"It was thot — an' a good wan," said Barney, solemnly. "Ivrything was comin' along foine, an' the skin was a curin' most illegant, when what shud thot spalpeen do but wake up in the noight an' fale av it. Bedad, it raised the back hair av him. Whilst he was cavortin' around in front av the camp, explainin' things to Billy and the men, I sneaked the skin out of his bunk and hid it under the boughs in me own. Ye see the byes were a little excoited, an' I'd no idee of bein' a candidate for another duckin'."

"You were very wise, Barney," laughed Norman.

"Sol Soc helped me start the skin this mornin' before loight, an' we'll have it so ye can kape it widout fear in a very short toime. Now moind thot ye whist."

With this parting admonition Barney made his way to the river with the men of the crew.

CHAPTER XI

AN ADVENTURE WITH CAMP THIEVES

Below Grand Pitch the drive progressed with comparatively little interruption, one strenuous day succeeding another. A considerable number of the men worked on the rear drive pushing out the stray logs that still lingered in the eddies and lodged along the shores. The nights were growing warm with the advance of June.

The big camp fires had given way to heavy smoke smudges that smouldered in front of the big camp tents, to keep off the mosquitoes, black flies and midges that swarmed out of a thousand moist and bosky shelters to prey upon the men.

"A mosquito is wholly vile and there's only one redeeming feature about a black fly," groaned Norman, as he rolled about in his bunk one sultry night, unable to sleep from the exquisite tortures inflicted by the blood-thirsty insects that invaded the camp.

"What's that?" asked Fred Warner.

"He'll stay in one place while you kill him."

"Huh! Nothing gained," grunted Warner. "A dozen more will come to the funeral."

"I reckon that's so," admitted Norman. "At any

rate, he's fair enough to come at you by daylight. It's the mosquito who robs you of your sleep."

"And the worst of it is that he skips around so lively that you can't tell from the songs he sings whether there's one or a million of him," growled Fred.

"I ran into a swarm of midges or 'no-see-ums' as Sol Soc calls them, this afternoon," continued Norman. "Tell you there was something doing for a while."

"You and I are at a disadvantage here," declared Fred, in tones of disgust. "No mosquito, or black fly or midge would think of biting one of the men. It would be like gnawing a piece of leather. They just concentrate on us."

"No doubt of it," agreed Norman.

"There's only one thing to do," continued Fred, as he rose from his bunk. "We must start up those smudges again."

"There's no escape from it, I suppose," said Norman, in a tone of resignation, "but it's a case where the remedy is about as bad as the disease."

A little later, with heavy smudges in full blast, they succeeded in falling asleep.

"Fly biteum?" asked Sol Soc, as he paused beside Norman after breakfast.

"They are making life a burden for me," confessed Norman.

"Useum this," said the Indian, putting a black bottle into his hand.

When the men had gone Norman poured some of the

liquid Sol had given him into his hand, and exhibited it to Fred Warner. It was a dark colored compound, thick and oily.

"Phew!" exclaimed the cookee, with a wry face. "It's got an able-bodied odor all right."

"There's oil, and tar, and pennyroyal and turpentine, and the virtues of a whole multitude of roots and herbs in it," laughed Norman.

"I shouldn't wonder if it did the business, however," replied Fred — a prophecy that proved true. Villainous as the compound appeared, and sticky and uncomfortable as it felt on face and hands, its use, nevertheless, relieved Norman and Fred of further serious trouble from insect pests.

"Ba Joe!" exclaimed Felix Lamarre, a few mornings later, "som' wan ban steal heem pork out de wangan tent."

"Are you sure?" demanded Eustace, as he accompanied him to the wangan tent, followed by a number of the men.

"Sure t'ing," declared Felix. "Jus' you look on top dat pork," he added, pointing to a large barrel that stood near the front of the tent.

"Been using out of it, haven't you?" demanded Eustace.

"Yass, but we nevaire use all dat. Dere ban more gone as nevaire was."

"You mean that there's more gone than you've used?" questioned Eustace.

"You bat! two, tree, mebbe four time more!"

"Man no takum," declared Sol Soc, who had been making a critical examination of the tent and its surroundings.

"Who did then?" demanded Eustace.

"Bear."

"Why do you think so?"

"Seeum track."

The Indian stooped beside the path leading to the river bank and pointed to an indistinct track in the black soil between two ledges.

"Guess you're right, Sol," agreed Eustace, after a moment's inspection. "It's a trifle faint, but there's no doubt about it. The thief was a bear all right."

"Begorra an' Oi'm thinkin' thot's not the worst av it," declared O'Connor.

"Right you are, Barney," assented Eustace. "When a bear gets an appetite for pork he's worse than a dog with a mouth for mutton. There's no hope of reform for him. You may scare him off for a dozen nights in succession, but he'll turn up again the very first time he thinks that the coast is clear. We've got to kill this fellow, or he'll follow the drive clear down to Greenbush."

"Me fixum," said the Indian.

"All right, Sol," returned Eustace. "You lay for him. If you can't get him, nobody can."

Norman was eating his supper that evening on a big boulder overlooking the river, when he was sud-

denly aware that some one was sharing his seat. He turned quickly to find that it was Sol Soc.

"How do you move, Sol, without making any noise?" he asked, with a laugh.

"Learnum how from Windigo," returned the Indian, solemnly.

"It was an excellent school," laughed Norman.

"You an' Fred like huntum bear?" asked the Indian, gravely.

"Sure, we would!" returned Norman, eagerly.

"Gotum finger light?"

"Yes, right here," returned Norman, pulling his electric lantern from his hip pocket.

"Good!" grunted the Indian, in a tone of satisfaction. "Wind he blow stlong from river to-night," he added. "Bear no smellum."

A little later, with their blankets spread in a thick clump of firs overlooking the wangan tent, Norman and Fred were keeping a night vigil, taking turns in staying awake for that purpose. A short distance up the road in another fir thicket, which commanded a view of the path leading down from the old wood-road, on which the camp was located, to the river, Sol Soc was keeping a similar watch.

It was a little past midnight when Norman, who was sleeping very quietly, was aroused by Fred's hand upon his shoulder.

"Sh-h-h," whispered the cookee, warningly, as his companion sat up on his blanket. "He's coming?"

"Who's coming?" demanded Norman, in a low tone.

"The thief."

They peered breathlessly through the low spreading boughs that hid their retreat, and their hearts beat fast as they saw a dark, lumbering form coming down the road.

"It's a bear!" whispered Fred in Norman's ear, in a voice tremulous with excitement.

Arriving at the open door of the wangan tent the night marauder paused and listened intently. Evidently satisfied that all was well, he passed within.

"Better take him when he comes out," whispered Fred. "He'll have his attention taken up with the pork, and won't be so likely to notice us."

"Just what I was thinking," agreed Norman.

"Sh-h-h," whispered Fred, warningly. "Great Scott! there's another one."

Looming indistinctly in the dark, another form was making its way with slow and stealthy tread up the old wood-road in the direction of the wangan.

"That's no bear. It's a man," whispered Norman.

"Perhaps it's Sol," answered Fred.

"No, it isn't," returned Norman, emphatically.

"Go slow! Don't be too sure," admonished Fred.

The newcomer had by this time reached the corner of the wangan tent. Here like his predecessor, he paused a moment to listen, but no sound save the mourning of the wind among the swaying tree-tops

broke the silence of the night. Evidently satisfied that the coast was clear, the newcomer tiptoed forward and entered the tent.

Almost immediately an angry growl from the wangan, followed by a wild shriek of terror, broke the silence of the night. Norman threw a long stream of light upon the wangan door in season to see a strange-looking man come reeling out of the tent, and fall sprawling to the ground. A big black bear immediately followed, and bounding over the prostrate man, tore up the wood-road with long bounds, from which direction, a moment later, the sharp crack of a rifle broke the stillness of the night.

"Come on!" shouted Norman, as he raced excitedly from his hiding place. "Let's get him."

He dashed forward with Fred close at his heels, and threw himself upon the man in front of the wangan.

"We've got you," he panted. "You might as well give up. Hold his legs there, Fred!"

The tones of his voice seemed to put new life into the discomfited thief.

"So it was you who hit me," he gasped. "I thought 'twas a bear."

He rolled and twisted with wonderful, wiry strength. A long, bony hand grasped Norman by the collar and pulled him to the ground, while two long legs which had been "jack-knifed" under Fred Warner suddenly straightened out and sent the cookee flat upon his back in the direction of the wangan.

The intruder would probably have made good his escape, had it not been for the prompt arrival of assistance. A dark form dashed up the wood-road, and threw itself upon the struggling thief.

"Arrah! ye spalpeen, an' is it a foight ye'd be wantin'?" shouted a familiar voice. "Shure it's not Barney O'Connor as wud let ony mon suffer for a scrap."

Norman tore himself free from the clutch of the thief, and threw a stream of light upon the struggling men.

"Good for ye, me bye," said O'Connor. "Sure 'tis a pleasure for to look a good scrapper in the face."

The sight revealed by the electric light was a most surprising one. O'Connor sat astride the chest of a tall, gaunt man whose dark eyes blazed in a wild frenzy of fear. The stranger's hair and beard were snow-white, the former falling to his shoulders, and the latter extending well down his chest. Both were tangled and unkempt.

"Be gorry, and Oi rickin it's the rale Windigo Oi'm afther havin' this toime," declared the Irishman, in a tone of amazement.

Fred Warner rose a little unsteadily from the ground and stood choking and wheezing by the door of the wangan tent.

"Are you hurt, Fred?" cried Norman, anxiously.

"N-no," gasped the cookee. "H-he knocked the wind out of me."

"Sure, an' there's plinty more av it on tap this noight," said Barney, consolingly.

"Th-thanks," returned Fred, dryly.

A tall form came rapidly down the wood-road.

"You gotum?" questioned a guttural voice.

"Toighter'n a bug in a rug," returned Barney, cheerfully.

"Good!"

There was a flash of lanterns, and a hum of voices, from the direction of the big camps. Presently the members of the crew put in an appearance in a tumult of excitement. They gazed with amazement upon the strange captive, who, his arms thoroughly bound with shingle rope, stood panting and wild-eyed, between Sol Soc and Barney O'Connor.

"It's the old man o' the mountain himself!" exclaimed Eustace, as he gazed upon him in unfeigned astonishment. "Where do you suppose he blew from?"

"Sure it's the rale Windigo," declared Barney O'Connor, solemnly, an assertion that called forth a gust of boisterous laughter from the men.

"Thought you said it was a bear, Sol," observed Eustace, in a bantering tone.

"Ya-as. Me gotum," replied the Indian, stolidly.

"Got a bear too!" exclaimed Eustace, incredulously. "Where is he?"

"Up de road lil piece."

"You see there were two thieves," explained Nor-

man, "the bear and the old fellow here. The bear got into the wangan first. The old fellow wasn't far behind him, but he didn't linger long in the tent."

"Looked as if the bear gave him the grand bounce," added Fred Warner.

Exclamations of wonder came from the men of the crew at this story.

"Begorra, an' Oi'm thinkin' as 'twas moighty lucky for th' ole gint here thot th' bear was contint wid givin' him a gintle cuff wid its paw," declared Barney O'Connor. "It's only a grase spot or two as wud been lift av him, if the ole feller had taken a notion for t' hug him."

"I guess he had a narrow escape all right," agreed Eustace. "Take him up to the camp, boys. Some of you had better go up the road with your lanterns and bring in Sol's bear."

The captive was taken to the camp where he was given a seat upon a small boulder, and securely tied to a white birch which stood immediately behind it.

A little later a group of the men reached camp carrying upon their shoulders two long poles, from which hung the big carcass of Sol Soc's bear. It was a massive brute in fair flesh, and with visions of fresh steaks for breakfast Sol and several of the men soon had it hung from improvised shambles suspended from a near-by tree, and devoted a considerable portion of the remainder of the night to the task of skinning and dressing it.

"I shouldn't wonder if that bear paid for the pork he and the old fellow have stolen several times over," remarked Eustace, as he returned to camp after watching this work for a few moments.

"An' sure ye don't think they were goin' cahoots, do ye?" questioned O'Connor, with twinkling eyes.

"I guess not," admitted Eustace, "although it looks to me as if one of them was about as wild as the other."

"I don't believe the old man ever stole any of our pork," declared Norman, with emphasis. "I don't think he ever got a chance to."

"Think the bear choked him off, do you?" questioned Eustace.

"I haven't any doubt of it," declared Norman.

"Good!" interposed Sol Soc, who had overheard the conversation.

"I see Sol agrees with you, so I reckon you must be right," said Eustace, good-naturedly. "Still, we'll hold him over night. He's a rare bird, and I'd really like to get a good square look at him by daylight."

He passed along to where the prisoner sat, and looked down upon his gaunt and weazened visage with a curious interest.

"What's your name?" he demanded presently.

The prisoner looked at him with frightened eyes. His lips moved, but no sound came from them.

"What did you say?" questioned Eustace.

"Dave Umber," gasped the prisoner.

Eustace turned to Norman and tapped his forehead significantly. "Cracked there," he said, "and pretty nigh scared to death."

"I don't believe he's used to this thing," declared Norman, with ready sympathy. "He's a poor old man, and I hope the boys won't be rough with him."

"I'll answer for that," declared Eustace. "No man was ever yet allowed to go away hungry from a camp of mine. Still, there are a few formalities I've always insisted on. One was that they should come to me like men in the daytime when some of the folks were around. I don't like this middle of the night business; but I'll see to it that Old Father Time gets a fair show."

"I knew you would," responded Norman. "I'm very sure from the looks of him that he's simply some poor, demented, harmless old fellow, who shrank from meeting the crew, and who simply undertook to levy on us for a meal."

Eustace turned abruptly on his heel and walked back to the prisoner.

"Where do you live?" he asked.

"In the heart," responded the old man, in thin, tremulous tones.

"In the heart of what?" persisted Eustace.

"The bog — by the still beaver waters."

"Live in a beaver house — do you?"

"Yes — my beaver house," was the low response. The eyes of the prisoner were full of the wild fear of

a hunted beast. "Don't — don't question me further, ye apostle of the host," he entreated, in a quaking voice.

Eustace turned away, impatiently.

"Crazy as a bedbug," he declared, with emphasis. "I reckon we'd better sleep on it and decide in the morning what to do with him. See that he is well fed, Barney, and stow him away comfortably for the rest of the night," he added, to O'Connor. "Now let's turn in, boys. There's isn't much left of the night but we must make the most of it. We've some hard work to do to-morrow."

There was a general turning in of the men, save Sol Soc and one or two others who were engaged in dressing the bear, and in a short time the big camps and their occupants were wrapt in solitude and slumber.

WORKING OUT A WING JAM.— *Page 142.*

CHAPTER XII

OFF FOR CHAMBERLAIN LAKE

"Oh, de wil' man o' Borneo's jus' com' along,
De wil' man o' Borneo's jus' com' along,
De wil' man o' Borneo's jus' com' along,
For ring dem' charmin' bells!
Hooraw!"

The members of the crew were just beginning breakfast when they joined in this song at the expense of their long-haired and cadaverous looking prisoner. Eustace was visibly annoyed.

"Shut up!" he said peremptorily. "There's no call for any of you to pester him. He's behaving himself a blame sight better than you are."

The weird old night-prowler had been brought from the camp bed where he had passed the night. The ropes had been removed from his hands and feet, affording him an opportunity to stretch his cramped limbs.

"Ye'll not be afther takin' Frinch lafe if Oi'm lavin' thim off, will ye?" asked Barney O'Connor, as he performed this service for the prisoner.

"No," promised the stranger.

"Hungry?" inquired the Irishman.

"Yes."

"Here, Fred, fetch a peck o' fodder for the Windigo," shouted Barney to Warner, who was hurrying by on his way to the cook's tent. "Bring the ould bye an extra large hunk av thot bear mate."

In a short time the prisoner was supplied with a generous breakfast, which he ate ravenously.

"It's very ivident that the wild man o' Borneo's got an aching void in his stomach," declared Barney, an allusion which moved some of the crew to the burst of song that had aroused the ire of Eustace.

The prisoner was bolting his food with astonishing rapidity, closely watching the crew meanwhile with his small round eyes that darted furtive glances from side to side in evident apprehension lest some unseen trouble might be lying in wait for him.

Bear steak was the principal feature of the breakfast, and was served in generous quantity. It was the first Norman had ever tasted, and although he was not wholly reconciled to its wild flavor, he nevertheless managed to dispose of the small piece with which he had permitted Warner to serve him. It was evident that this part of the meal was especially relished by the prisoner, and as Norman watched him holding the large slice which he had been provided with in his long, bony fingers, and eagerly tearing it apart with his discolored teeth, he could not resist the conviction that, after all, Barney O'Connor had not been far out of the way in calling him "the wild man of Borneo."

"Well, boys, what shall we do with the old fellow?"

demanded Eustace a moment later, having recovered his usual equanimity.

"Geeve heem de codfeesh."

"Souse heem in reever."

"Shoot heem," were some of the punishments suggested by the crew.

"Well, what do you say, Felix?" asked Eustace of the cook, who had come out from his tent to watch proceedings.

"I t'ink he go for steal pork, we better drown heem een barrel of bean," was the solemn response.

"But that would be a shameful waste of beans," objected the boss, with an air of seriousness.

"Wall, you want for feex heem cheap, I gass you better hang heem in tree," declared Felix.

"Hang me! Shoot me! Drown me! Oh, ye accursed fiends! ye forsaken of the Lord!" shrieked the prisoner, in shrill tones, leaping wildly to his feet in a frenzy of fear.

"Sit down wid ye," said Barney O'Connor. "Don't be afther gettin' woolly. Shure I'd not lave one o' the spalpeens tetch a hair av yes head."

The prisoner reseated himself, and resumed the destruction of his bear steak, to which he had clung tenaciously, in spite of his apparent terror.

"Bedad, it's hard separatin' a dog from his bone," declared O'Connor, a remark which called forth a roar of laughter from the men.

"Father Time doesn't appear to be gifted with gab.

I fear he has never kissed the blarney stone," said Eustace. "He has, however, one friend here in camp who believes in his innocence, and I'm going to ask him to speak for the prisoner at the —"

"Grub," interposed Barney O'Connor.

"Well, let it go at that," laughed Eustace. "We'll listen for a moment to Mr. Norman Carver."

Norman rose to his feet in some bewilderment at this unexpected call, to the very evident enjoyment of the men.

"Speech!"

"Speet heem rat out!"

"Throw ye'silf, me bye!" they shouted to him, in jovial tones.

"I didn't expect this job, boys," said Norman, good-naturedly. "Eustace has put it up on me; but I will say this. I think you will all agree with me that our genial friend here, Mr. Dave Umber, is as harmless as he is talkative, and as innocent as he is handsome."

Shouts of "yass," "yass," "bat you life," "go on," from the grinning men, greeted this statement.

"He lives his peaceful life in the heart of the bog, by the still beaver water," continued Norman. "All of you know where that is."

"Sure t'ing," "yass," "yass," laughed the men.

"It is an outrage to call this man a thief," asserted Norman, solemnly. "He was ranging the woods last night in search of game, when he discovered a large black bear stealing along this wood-road. He promptly

took his trail and followed him up, determined to secure him if he could, and at all events prevent him from doing any mischief. Fred Warner and I saw him not very far behind him. Old Bruin went into the wangan tent to steal our pork and our brave friend followed him there, with little if any hesitation. There was an encounter — a scrap between Dave and the bear. It is true that Old Bruin knocked him out in a short time; but that should not be held against our good friend. It was not an equal contest, and no doubt he did his best. I want to call your attention to the fact that we saved our pork and got some good bear meat beside."

"Sure t'ing." "Dat ban so," laughed the men.

"What punishment would you suggest?" interposed Eustace.

"Punishment!" echoed Norman, in well-feigned amazement. "I say it is not a case for punishment at all. The distinguished services of our friend entitle him to a reward."

"And what shall it be?" laughed Eustace.

"I would suggest that he be given a good sized chunk of the pork he saved, a forequarter of the bear, and allowed to depart in peace."

"What do you say, boys?" demanded Eustace.

"Yass," "Yass," shouted the men.

"It is a vote," announced Eustace. "Fred, put some pork and bear meat in one of those meal bags."

As the cookee hastened to carry out these instruc-

tions, Norman resumed his seat. The prisoner rose to his feet, and walked over to him.

"You're a good boy," he said, in quavering tones, placing a bony hand on Norman's head. "You stood up for Dave Umber. He will not forget it."

"Don't mention it," returned Norman, very red in the face.

The old prisoner looked like a patriarch as he towered above the boy in the dim light of the early morning. There was something weird in his appearance that touched the superstitious natures of the men. They forbore to laugh, and a strange hush fell upon them.

Fred Warner brought the well-filled meal bag, and handed it to Umber.

The old man threw it across his shoulder. He started up the wood-road with it and then, pausing a short distance beyond the big wangan tent, he turned and faced them.

"Good-bye," he shouted in tremulous tones, with a wave of his long arm.

"Good-bye," they answered.

The old man turned abruptly to his right and disappeared among the fir-trees.

"That's a character," said Eustace, with a sigh of relief, when he had passed from sight, "the strangest one I have ever run across in all my experience. I reckon we are well rid of him. Now, boys, for the logs," and, followed by the members of the crew, he

made his way down the boulder-studded pathway leading to the river.

The Sebois drive was rapidly nearing its close. Already the advance logs were entering the East Branch of the Penobscot. It would be but a day or two before the Sebois rear drive would follow them, and Eustace and his men be merged in the larger force that was handling the main drive on the East Branch.

The following morning a tall, wiry, resolute-looking man put in an appearance at the camp.

"Where's Eustace?" he demanded, briefly.

"He's on the river with the crew," responded Norman. "Did you want to see him?"

"Yes, as soon as I can," responded the stranger. "I think he'd better come here. Tell him that Steve Merrill wants to see him."

"I'll go and get him," responded Norman, promptly.

Steve Merrill, the East Branch boss! Norman could not help stealing another glance at this sunburned, strong-featured, square-jawed man whose skill and daring he had heard discussed around many a campfire, and whose very name was one to conjure with on East Branch waters.

Norman hastened away to get Eustace, whom he found directing the men in working out a small wing jam that had lodged against the shore.

"Steve Merrill is at the camp and wants to see you there," he announced.

Eustace gave a whistle of surprise.

"Steve Merrill!" he ejaculated. "Something's doing or he wouldn't be leaving his work on the East Branch and coming up here."

He hurried back to the camp with Norman, where he found Merrill pacing nervously up and down in front of the big tents.

He greeted Eustace cordially, and while Norman withdrew to the cook's camp the two men stood apart by themselves in very earnest conversation.

"The Allegash fellows have got in their work," announced Merrill.

"I was afraid they meant mischief," returned Eustace.

"That's just what they did. A gang of them dynamited the dam at the outlet of Chamberlain Lake last night."

"You don't say!" exclaimed Eustace, in amazement. "I never thought they'd go to that length."

"Nor I either," agreed Merrill. "Mind you, Billy, I don't lay it up against the Allegash operators. I know they've never gotten over the loss of the Chamberlain Lake waters; but I don't believe they'd countenance anything of this sort. I judge it was a little side issue with some of their understrappers."

"Did they take it all out?"

"No, just loosened her up at the northwest end. I reckon we can fix it; but meanwhile we need every drop of the water that they're getting from us. Have you got some one who knows this country and who

can range over it and blow out the beaver dams? If we get that water it will help to tide us along while we are repairing the dam."

"I have a Frenchman who knows every inch of this section. I'll fit him up and start him out right away."

"That's good. Tell him not to let any grass grow under his feet. Now for the dam. I've got half a dozen men there now and two or three on the way. I want you to take three or four of your best and nerviest men and go up and take charge of the repairs. Better take along a gun apiece. If those fellows try to finish their job just see that they get a mighty warm reception. You'd better plan for a couple of men to scout the woods for you while the work is going on."

"I've got two bright, active young fellows with me who can do that work first rate," returned Eustace. "One of them is clerk, and the other cookee. I can put old Jim Benner in charge of the crew until they join you on the East Branch. Jud Skinner can act as his assistant. He is a good driver but hasn't so good a head as Benner. I can let a young Frenchman I have in the crew act as cookee. He's done such work before."

"That's all right, Billy," said Merrill, with approval. "I'm mighty glad you were available for this work. If you hadn't been I really don't know what I should have done. I have hardly a man to spare. They couldn't have chosen a worse time, so far as I'm concerned, to get in this rap at us."

"It's going to be something of a jaunt from here to the Chamberlain Lake dam," said Eustace, "some sixty-four or five miles from the juncture of the Sebois and the East Branch, and that's a good six miles from here."

"I reckon, Billy, if you strike across the old Davis tote-road half a mile from here you'll just about come out on the East Branch at Monument Line. It will be a fifteen-mile jaunt from there to the foot of Grand Lake. Jake Wiley is there in charge of the dam. He's got two big canoes you can take. Sports would require about three days to paddle and carry from there to Chamberlain dam; but I'm counting on you doing it in about half the time. The tow-boat will meet you at the foot of Telos."

"We'll certainly get there as soon as we can," said Eustace. "When do you want us to start?"

"Right away. This very morning. You'd better go as light as possible. Pack up your extra dunnage and leave it with Benner. We've got a fair stock of provisions at the camp at Chamberlain dam, pork, beans, etc. With what you can carry in light stuff I think there'll be plenty."

"Hi there! Norman and Fred," shouted Eustace.

Both boys, feeling confident that something was up, responded to the call with alacrity. In a few words Eustace explained the situation to them, and told them of his desire for them to accompany him to the Chamberlain dam, to which they assented most gladly,

delighted at the unexpected opening for a change. Fred was dispatched to the river to summon Jim Benner, Sol Soc, Barney O'Connor, Tom Boggs, and Joe Landre. In a short time they were at the camp, and the situation was explained to them. All of them were vehement in their denunciations of the outrage that had been perpetrated in the attempted blowing up of the dam. It was quickly arranged for Barney, Sol, and Long Tom to accompany Eustace, Benner to take charge of the closing up of the drive on the Sebois, with Jud Skinner for his assistant, and Joe Landre to go through the surrounding section, and blow out the beaver dams.

The work of preparing for the trip was quickly accomplished. A pack was arranged for each man, and in addition most of the party carried guns, Norman taking along his double-barreled, hammerless shot-gun, and Fred wearing on his belt a six-shooter Colt's revolver, which had been a heritage from his father.

Barney O'Connor and Sol Soc carried Winchester rifles, and Tom Boggs an old breech-loading Springfield rifle, whose barrel had been cut off to convert it into a carbine, which Barney solemnly asserted to be equally dangerous at either end.

"I never did like gun play very well," declared Long Tom, good-naturedly, in response to the Irishman's comment upon his antiquated weapon. "I'd a blame sight rather come to close quarters, an' lay to with my fists."

"Bedad, it's iver so much more excoiting an' not half as dangerous," assented Barney, with enthusiasm.

"I guess I'll stay here until to-morrow morning," said Merrill to Eustace, "and help Benner straighten matters out with the crew."

"It's a good idea," rejoined Eustace, "although Jim has had experience in handling men on the drive, and I don't think he'll have any trouble with them. They're not a bad lot."

"I reckon we'll manage t' keep house," said Benner, "though I don't mind saying, Mr. Merrill, that a word or two from you will go a long way in starting matters off on the right track with the men."

"Well, good-bye all," said Eustace, as he shouldered his pack. "We'll see you later."

There was a general shaking of hands and then the members of the party followed in single file behind Eustace, as he led the way, with quick, swinging stride, up the old wood-road in the direction of the East Branch.

"I'll eat my hat if there isn't a surprised crew of men on the Sebois when the boys hear of this," remarked Long Tom Boggs, with a chuckle, as they walked along.

"They know something's up," returned Eustace. "There's been so many of us called from our work to-day."

"I hope we'll have a chance to get back on that Allegash gang," added Boggs.

"The murtherin' spalpeens!" exclaimed Barney O'Connor, indignantly.

Eustace laughed, grimly.

"I should think that your chances for it were fairly good," he said.

CHAPTER XIII

A TRIP THROUGH THE LAKE COUNTRY

"Well, are you petered, boys?"

Eustace stopped, and turned to Norman and Fred Warner as he asked this question.

"I can't deny that I'm a little tired, but a good way from petered yet," responded Norman, with a smile.

"Don't stop on my account," said Warner.

"I'm anxious to make Grand Lake to-night," said Eustace. "I know it's a good deal of a jaunt with the roads as rough as we have found them; but we sha'n't have to walk to-morrow, except round the carries. I don't feel that we ought to lose any time in getting to Chamberlain Lake dam."

"We are good for it," declared Norman.

"Well, I don't believe we'll lose anything in the long run if we stop and enjoy a breathing spell now and then," said Eustace, as he seated himself on a big windfall by the roadside, an example that Norman and Fred very gladly followed.

Sol Soc was visibly impatient, and remained standing.

"I know this isn't much of a walk for you, Sol," said Eustace. "Perhaps you and Barney better go

along to Grand Lake to get supper and fix up a lean-to for us."

"Better count me in, too," said Boggs.

"All right," rejoined Eustace. "Go ahead. That will save time and give the rest of us a chance to take the tramp a little more leisurely. Don't suppose you boys will mind a late supper."

"Not at all," said Fred.

"I don't think I need one," declared Norman. "I ate about twice as big a dinner as I really should have; but I had a ravenous appetite, and Lamarre's biscuits did taste unusually good."

"Felix is the best woods cook I ever had," said Eustace. "I don't know how we shall make out at the Chamberlain dam. It may be a case of draft."

"We may find a prize," suggested Norman, hopefully.

"Perhaps," said Eustace, doubtfully. "As near as I can reckon we got away from camp about nine o'clock," he continued, looking at his watch. "It's three o'clock now, and here we are at the foot of Bowlin Pitch. As I figure it out we've come about fifteen miles, not so very bad considering the loads we've carried, and the roads we've had."

"I understood Barney to say that the first rough water we should come to would be Grand Falls," remarked Norman.

"So it is — the lower part of it," assented Eustace. "You see the next four miles above us is made up of

a succession of pitches, the water racing down hill all the way, like a house afire. Coming down the river there's Pond Pitch, Grand Pitch, Hulling Machine Falls, and Bowlin Pitch — one after the other and covering, all told, about four miles of pretty lively water. All of them taken together make up what is known as the Grand Falls of the East Branch."

"There's another Grand Falls, isn't there?" asked Warner.

"Yes. That's up on Webster stream, a short distance above its confluence with the East Branch. I tell you there's a stretch of wild water there! The current takes a down jump of fifty feet at the falls."

"How far do you think it is to Grand Lake from here?" asked Fred.

"About a dozen miles," responded Eustace.

"We sha'n't get there till nearly eight o'clock at the rate we've been going," said Norman.

"We ought to make it by seven," declared Eustace. "That's only three miles an hour, and we shall have full better roads for it." He rose and readjusted his pack. "We'd better be travelling," he said.

An exclamation of surprise came from Norman.

"What's up?" inquired Eustace.

"My dunnage is gone. I threw it down in the bushes at the end of that log."

"So is mine," said Warner.

"It didn't walk away without legs," laughed Eustace. "Sol and Barney evidently concluded to give

you a lift. They're pretty husky fellows, and besides they've got Tom Boggs along to spell them. You were too busy talking when they passed on to notice how they were loaded."

"I never dreamed of such a thing as their taking my stuff," declared Warner.

"Nor I either," said Norman. "They must have taken us for a couple of softies," he added, in a tone of chagrin.

"No, they didn't," assured Eustace. "They knew you would lug your load to the end of the trail without a whimper. That was one reason why they were so willing to let you out."

"You must let us lug your load part of the way," said Norman.

"When it gets to riding me too hard, I'll surely let you know," laughed Eustace, evasively, as he started up the trail along the river bank at a considerably faster pace than they had been travelling before.

Relieved of their burdens, save Norman's shot-gun which Warner insisted on carrying a part of the time, the boys found it comparatively easy to keep pace with their wiry leader, who kept steadily along the river bank by the well-worn path which had evidently been used by the river drivers.

It was a wild and picturesque stretch of roaring river, running for the most part through black growth, that claimed their attention for the next four miles. Above Bowlin Pitch was Hulling Machine Falls, racing

its way over a rock-studded bed, between shores of massive ledge. Higher up they looked in admiration upon the rushing, roaring, foaming waters of Grand Pitch and Pond Pitch.

"Doesn't look like very good water for a canoe," commented Norman.

"Well, hardly," assented Eustace. "Indians and men specially skilled in the use of the paddle usually run Bowlin Pitch, but they almost invariably carry around Hulling Machine Falls; also Grand Pitch and Pond Pitch."

For a time they tramped along in silence, each busy with his own reflections. Norman was especially impressed with the rugged majesty and strength of the wild scenery that hemmed in the roaring, rocky river gorge with a bewildering vista of densely wooded hills and valleys.

"Haskell's Rock Pitch," announced Eustace, a little later. "We'll follow the carry road."

A walk of about three-quarters of a mile brought them above this pitch with its swift-moving white waters. For two miles they followed along a wood-road that lay beyond the river banks. Presently, they stood upon a rugged shore, and gazed with fascinated wonder upon a series of cascades, as the foaming water came tumbling down over a succession of rocky reefs extending from shore to shore.

"Stair Falls," said Eustace.

"And do canoeists run that?" asked Norman.

"Almost always, when there is a fair depth of water," responded the boss. "It might be a trifle ticklish now, but I don't imagine it would phase Sol Soc or Barney O'Connor."

"It's well named," said Fred Warner. "Those rock-reefs make a giant's stairway."

"We'll cross the river and take the Forty-rod Carry," said Eustace. He drew from the bushes below the falls a roughly built, flat-bottomed boat. "This is lucky," he said, with evident satisfaction. "I was afraid we might have to build a raft."

With two rude board paddles which the rough craft contained they made their way across the river to the opposite shore, where they found the well-beaten road of the carry leading up the ascent to the smoother water above the falls. They had gone but a short distance when Eustace paused and threw down his pack near a spring of water that bubbled up from the earth, clear and cold. A tin tomato can hung, bottom up, on a near-by bush, supplied an ample drinking cup.

"There's no better water than this anywhere," declared Eustace, as they rested a moment after testing its virtues, and both the boys signified their assent.

"We've made very good time, I think," said the boss, consulting his watch. "Only ten minutes past five, and we've done about seven miles since three o'clock."

"How far is it from here to Grand Lake?" asked Norman.

"Five miles from the head of this carry. We ought to get there in season to have a fairly early supper. Sol has got our camp outfit, and they say Tom Boggs is something of an artist with a fry-pan."

"I for one will be entirely ready to test his skill," declared Norman.

Above Stair Falls they continued their way along the river bank by a somewhat rough and devious path, whose rugged surface bore mute testimony to the impact of spike-sole shoes.

It was a quarter of seven when they finally came in sight of the dam at the foot of Grand Lake. Not far away Sol, Boggs, and O'Connor had erected a very comfortable lean-to. Near it a fire was burning, and the savory odors of cooking food revived their drooping spirits.

"Trout, as sure as I'm alive!" exclaimed Eustace, joyfully, as he paused beside the fire where Boggs was busy with a frying-pan. "Where did you get them, Tom?"

"Don't know," responded Boggs. "Barney and I told Sol we'd fix up the camp if he'd get us a mess of trout. He took us up mighty quick. Borrowed a canoe o' Jake Wiley an' cleared out. I haven't the slightest notion where he went. Mebbe up Trout Brook for all I know. He's an awful critter t' cover distance. One thing's sartin, though, he fetched back th' trout — all we can eat on 'em, an' beauties too."

A little later, seated about on some logs that had

been junked up for the purpose, the party ate their fill of the delicious trout, which had been rolled in Indian meal and fried in pork fat, and which came out of the frying-pan done to a turn. The trout, with cold biscuits, hot tea, and some clear, cold water brought from a neighboring spring, constituted the entire bill of fare, but Norman declared with evident sincerity that he had never enjoyed a finer repast.

At its close Sol, Barney, and Boggs lit their pipes to swap news with Jake Wiley, tall, gaunt, and hungry for human companionship, who had shared their supper with them, and to whom their coming was an unmistakable event.

"Who is taking care of the Chamberlain dam?" asked Eustace, with evident interest.

"Sam Wilkins," responded Wiley, removing his long T. D. pipe from his mouth, and slowly blowing a meditative whiff into the air.

"Where was he when the Allegash men blew it up?"

"He was sound asleep in the camp with Jerry Cox who was up there doing some repairs on the tug. They got out there with their rifles in 'bout two shakes of a buck's tail. Saw in a minute what had been done; but th' fellers as done it had cleared out; couldn't find hide nor hair on 'em. They fired a few shots where they s'pected they'd gone, but, Cracky Jinks! it didn't do no good."

Wiley returned his pipe to his mouth, and smoked vigorously to get it under full headway again.

"One thing is certain, it gave them notice that there'd be something doing if they came back again," suggested Eustace.

"Sartin sure," assented Wiley out of the corner of his mouth. "They wasn't huntin' for cold lead. Guess they thought when they come there thet Sam and Jerry war'n't to hum. Both on 'em had been out on th' lake in th' tug thet day. There was suthin' more Jerry wanted t' do to her. So they tied her up in th' cove below Fir Point, et their supper there an' come back to the camp a little atter dark an' turned in."

"That's it," declared Eustace. "They thought the coast was clear and went ahead. I'll bet dollars to doughnuts they were planning to clean out the tramway, too."

"Like es not," assented Wiley. "They'd have got a mighty warm reception, though, if they'd showed up agin thet night. Sam an' Jerry was chuck full o' fight; sot up all night a-guardin' the dam. Next mornin' afore daylight Jerry had up steam in the tug and was headed for East Branch waters t' tell th' news. He got down here 'bout the middle th' arternoon. I had three men with me a-fixin' up th' sluiceway. I sent two on 'em right back with him, and hustled t'other down th' river t' tell Steve Merrill what had happened. Four men from th' rear drive showed up here this mornin' hotfoot on their way t' Chamberlain. This noon my man an' two others come along an' I hustled 'em over th' same trail. They told me Steve Merrill

was all riled up over th' matter, an' was a-goin' t' send you up t' take charge o' th' campaign. So I had 'em leave word with old man Lajoie to have a team ready t' tote your canoes an' dunnage from the lower end o' Indian Carry to Webster Lake."

"That's good," said Eustace, in a tone of satisfaction.

"Thet will only leave you the canal between Webster and Telos Lakes to carry around," pursued Wiley.

"It's only a mile, and we're good for that," asserted Eustace, confidently.

"Begorra, it's hopin' for a rid-hot scrap Oi am," joined in Barney O'Connor.

"I'm with ye, Barney," added Tom Boggs, with enthusiasm. "Wake up there, Sol!" he added, to the Indian, who was stolidly smoking his pipe and taking no part in the conversation. "What d'ye say?"

"Good!" grunted Sol.

"Which manes he'll be there wid both fate wheniver he's naded," interpreted Barney.

"I shouldn't wonder if you fellows got about all the scrapping you wanted before we get through with this matter," said Eustace. "I haven't any idea that those Allegash men will give up without making at least one more attempt to finish the job they started out to do — especially if Gusty Peters is at the bottom of this affair, as I suspect he is."

"Gusty Peters!" exclaimed Tom Boggs, delightedly. "I'd be willin' t' give a month's pay fer a

chance t' play another tattoo on thet big, red bugle o' his."

"We mustn't underestimate him, boys," cautioned Eustace. "He's a tenacious fellow, and for all that fog-horn voice of his gives strangers the impression that he's pretty much all front, those of us who know him will vouch for the fact that he's a desperate fighter, and not over-particular about his methods."

"I didn't find him any great shakes that night at Larry Hunt's," persisted Boggs.

"He'd been drinking then, or you wouldn't have found him so easy," rejoined Eustace.

"Well, then I hope I'll get a chance to try him out when he's sober."

"It's a slim chance of it ye'll hov, Oi'm thinkin'," interposed Barney.

"Sech things es thet hev ben known t' happen," said Boggs. "So fur as I'm consarned, I'd a good deal ruther git a chance at Black Jake Jasper."

"I thought Skinner settled it with him on the road to the Sebois," said Eustace.

"He only gin him th' first payment," declared Boggs, grimly.

"An' I reckon Jake put it down to his credit," said Barney.

"I ruther suspicioned from th' way he eyed Skinner an' th' rest on us thet night at Larry Hunt's thet he wouldn't be altogether sorry t' meet us agin, when matters was a-breakin' better for him," remarked Boggs.

"I'm planning to get that dam fixed up just as soon as I can after we get there," said Eustace. "While that work is going on I'll let Norman and Fred circle round through the woods and see if they can discover any signs of those fellows sneaking in on us. Meanwhile, we'll keep the dam well guarded day and night."

"You wouldn't shoot, would ye?" demanded Boggs.

There was an ominous flash in the eyes of the boss, and a resolute look in his face.

"I should be governed somewhat by circumstances," he said, "but I'll tell you this, boys, any man who undertakes to tamper with that dam while I'm in charge of it will do so at his peril."

"Good for ye!" exclaimed Barney O'Connor, approvingly. "Thot's the way Oi loike to hear ye talk."

There was a murmur of assent from the others.

"I want to thank you, Sol, for lugging my dunnage," said Norman to the Indian as they were turning in for the night. "I was pretty well fagged when I got here, and if you hadn't helped me out I don't think I should have had supper with you."

"Ugh!" grunted the Indian, with evident embarrassment, "dat all right — no t'ing 't all," and rolling himself in his blanket he was soon fast asleep.

Norman lay awake for a time listening to the weird calls of a pair of loons down the lake, the shrill cry of some night-hawks in their evening quest of insects, and the complaining waters as they ran through the dam chute, and fell, with mournful cadence, into

the pool below. Gradually the rugged landscape and its voices faded from his hazy consciousness, and he slept as soundly as the others.

WAITING FOR THE OPENING OF THE SLUICEWAY AT THE DAM. — *Page 168*

CHAPTER XIV

THE ARRIVAL AT CHAMBERLAIN DAM

"This is my first canoe trip," remarked Norman the next morning, as they were preparing to embark upon the waters of Grand Lake in the two big canoes that Jake Wiley had provided them with.

"That's why I put you in between Sol and me," said Eustace. "We are old hands and will keep you out of mischief."

"Keepum still. You ben all right," admonished Sol.

"How 'bout a race?" asked Tom Boggs, who sat in the stern of the other canoe with Barney O'Connor and Fred Warner for companions.

"It's slow and steady for me," returned Eustace, good-naturedly, "though I haven't much doubt but what Sol could make you pound water a bit."

"Begorra, he could thot," declared Barney, as he stowed himself away in the bow of the canoe with Boggs. "Oi've handled a paddle wid thot bye once or twice mesilf."

"Push off," shouted Eustace.

With an almost imperceptible shove of his paddle the Indian sent the canoe out into the deep waters of the lake. To Norman seated upon his blanket folded

on the bottom of the frail craft, midway between Eustace in the bow and Sol Soc in the stern, there was a distinct tingle of exhilaration in the sensation of being afloat. He glanced at his watch.

"What time?" asked Sol.

"Five o'clock," answered Norman.

"A very good start," commented Eustace, with satisfaction. "We'll do some business to-day if we have any kind of luck."

With long, sweeping strokes of the paddles Sol and Eustace drove the canoe up the lake with an ease and speed that was a constant surprise to Norman. The idea of a race having been abandoned, Boggs and O'Connor were content to hold their course within comfortable speaking distance behind Sol and Eustace. The four-mile run up the beautiful stretch of water was a memorable one for Norman, and he was lost in admiration of the superb scenery that lay about him in the bright sunshine of the glorious June morning. Great rocky headlands made out into the lake at several points, and its long north shore was indented with a series of picturesque coves.

"What mountain is that?" he asked, as he gazed in admiration upon the vast height whose rugged sides and seamy crest dominated the landscape.

"That's old Katahdin, the highest mountain in Maine," responded Eustace. "It's five thousand two hundred feet above the level of the sea, and 'most all granite."

"Katahdin must be an Indian name," said Norman. "What does it mean, Sol?"

"Him mean highest land," responded the Indian.

"There's the mouth of Trout Brook," said Eustace, pointing to a stream that made its way into the lake through a gorge in the hills.

"Looks as if Nature cut that notch in the landscape on purpose for it," commented Norman.

"It did, and 'twas something of a slice too," assented Eustace. "That little island at the mouth of Trout Brook is a favorite camping place with river drivers. They call it Louse Island," he added.

"It's picturesque enough to deserve a better name," said Norman.

"I agree with you," said Eustace. "The men on the drive are not disposed to be very fastidious in the titles they bestow."

Leaving Grand Lake they followed a stream which wound its way between marshy, grass-grown banks for a distance of about four miles, and entered upon a beautiful sheet of water which Eustace stated to be Second Lake.

"Every lake here seems to have its own peculiar charms," said Norman, with enthusiasm.

"They are all beautiful," agreed Eustace.

Second Lake certainly had much to commend it to a lover of Nature. Several picturesque islands dotted its surface, and heavily wooded headlands lent grandeur to the shores.

For four miles they paddled their way over its waters, and then came out again into the East Branch. For the next quarter of an hour their way lay along a narrow channel which ran between grassy banks, and over occasional sand-bars.

For about a mile and a half they held their way along this course, and then ran their canoe to the shore, where they found an old man, with a rude buckboard drawn by two heavy horses, awaiting them.

"This is the lower end of Indian Carry," explained Eustace. "We shall go about three-quarters of a mile over this road and come to Webster Stream which also runs into Second Lake, but is too rough for a canoe. It is by all odds the wildest ten miles of water between Chamberlain Lake and the Sebois River. Well, Uncle Amie, did you think we weren't coming?" he added, to the owner of the team, who had hurried forward to meet them.

"No — not me!" was the smiling response. "I know w'en you start for go som'w'ere, ba Joe, you got dere!"

"Think you can haul us?"

"Sure t'ing. Ba cripe, I eat me dem horse dey can't haul dis leetle load."

For a time the men were busy helping Lajoie stow their canoes and baggage upon the buckboard, securing it in place with many feet of binding rope.

"We've got ten and three-quarters miles to go on this carry," announced Eustace, "and I'm not counting

on making it quite so quick as we have the thirteen and a half miles we've come since we started out this morning."

"How long have we been?" asked Norman.

"Two hours and a half."

"I knew we were moving along at a good clip," said Norman, "but I had no idea we were making as good time as that."

"Got quite a good bit of kick left yet, haven't we, Sol?" continued Eustace, turning to the Indian.

"Me bet," was the laconic response.

"Got the kinks out of your legs, Norman?" inquired Eustace, with a smile.

"Good as new," laughed Norman. "I rather think the exercise you gave them yesterday has made them jaunt proof."

"Well, we might as well ride with Uncle Amie the three-quarters of a mile across the Indian Carry; but when we reach Webster Stream if you want to walk — and I rather think you will after you've tried that tote-road a spell — I'll show you some of the swiftest water and wildest shores you've ever seen."

For the next twenty-five minutes they rode along the primitive road of the carry behind the leisurely moving horses of Uncle Amie Lajoie. At the end of that time they came to the shore of Webster Stream at a point just above Grand Falls, which was shallow enough for the horses to ford.

They stopped for a few moments while Uncle Amie

was making his slow way to the tote-road on the opposite shore to look at the beautifully picturesque falls, where the waters of the stream made a fifty-foot plunge down the face of a rocky wall, and went roaring on to meet and mingle with the waters of the East Branch.

While the team was bumping its tedious way over the rough tote-road, Eustace and Norman improved the opportunity to see something of the rugged scenery which marked the wild river gorge down which the frothing waters of Webster Stream rushed with tumultuous roar. It was a vision of scenic grandeur which Norman never forgot. There were stretches of low falls and whirling eddies in the river bed studded with great and thick-set rocks; there were rocky cuts and chasms, and mighty ledge cliffs baffling the fuming current, and towering in places several hundred feet above its surface.

It was a little past noon when they finally reached the shores of Webster Lake.

Here while the canoes and the dunnage were being unpacked Sol Soc managed to secure half a dozen fine trout and a string of white perch, which, when fried and washed down with steaming tea, made a most welcome addition to their dinner.

After they had satisfied the cravings of their keen woods appetites the members of the party bade goodbye to Uncle Amie, and embarked for their trip up Webster Lake. Half an hour of vigorous paddling brought them to the lower end of the canal which con-

nected Webster and Telos Lakes. It scarcely seemed possible to Norman that this rocky channel, down which the waters that were once a part of what was the Allegash system leaped and churned on their eager way to the East Branch, could have been an artificial one. It was evident that Nature had improved not a little upon the labors of men, in the working out of the channel.

"Here's where we carry for a mile," announced Eustace, as they drew the canoes ashore. "I might have had Uncle Amie haul us clear through to Telos Lake, but I thought we'd get there quicker to canoe the three miles up Webster and carry ourselves to Telos. I'll let Sol and Boggs handle our dunnage, and the rest of us will carry the fleet."

The canoes were turned bottom up and carried on the shoulders of the bearers, one at either end, Eustace and Norman carrying one, and Barney and Fred the other. "Now, slow and steady," cautioned Eustace. "We are not going to try to keep up with Sol and Boggs. They're sprinters, and will beat us out anyway with the dunnage. Take time, and be sure of your footing."

It was half-past two when, after stopping a few times to rest, they finally reached the shores of Telos Lake, where they found that Sol and Boggs, who had been doubling back and forth along the tote-road, had their luggage waiting for them.

Here also they found Jerry Cox with the small tow-

boat that had superseded head-works in driving on Chamberlain waters.

"Well, is the dam still there?" was the greeting of Eustace, as he shook him cordially by the hand.

"The most of it," was the response.

"How many men are there at the dam?"

"Eight."

"Well, there'll be fifteen of us when we get there. Haven't heard anything from the Allegash fellers, have you?"

"The boys caught a glimpse of some one skulking in the woods this morning, but he cleared out mighty lively. It wouldn't be healthy for any of that gang to go monkeying with the dam again," declared Cox, with emphasis.

"What are the men doing to-day?"

"Getting out timber. They thought they wouldn't begin repairs till you got there. There's a pretty good-sized break in the dam, but she's holding all right."

"I reckon we'll make her as good as new in a few days," declared Eustace, confidently.

"Got those canoes hitched astern, Sol?"

"Ya-as."

"Well, toot her up, Jerry."

Cox started his engine, and, with Eustace at the wheel, the stanch little steamer swung from the shore and headed up the lake.

"We are in a great sporting country here," said Eustace to Norman, who stood beside him. "This

whole territory abounds with fish and game. A very good tote-road leads to Sourdnahunk Lake, six miles south of here, a regular sportsman's paradise. It's one of the best moose sections in Maine."

"How far is it to the dam?" asked Norman.

"About eighteen miles. It's three o'clock now, and I reckon we ought to get there about supper time. This boat was built for pull and not for speed."

"How did they get their logs across Chamberlain Lake before they had her?" asked Norman.

"With head-works," responded Eustace.

"It must have been a killing job," commented Norman.

"Well, the boys did used to come off from it looking as if they'd been through the war," admitted Eustace, "but drivers were always tough in this section."

For five miles they held their course up Telos Lake, and then entered the thoroughfare about three miles long which connects it with Chamberlain Lake. It was a wide, sluggish stream which widened near its center, into a small lake about a mile in length called Telosmis. Beyond the thoroughfare they entered the long, broad waters of Chamberlain Lake.

It was about six o'clock when they came to a stop near Chamberlain dam. The men at work there were gathered on the shore to meet them, and greeted the arrival of their leader and the other accessions to their forces with an exultant cheer. They were rough, hardy-looking fellows, and Norman felt that, in recruit-

ing this force, Steve Merrill had made sure that they were the kind of men who could be depended upon to maintain the interests of the East Branch Log Driving Company at all hazards. They were relieved to find that the East Branch boss, mindful of their comfort, had sent along a man with some experience in woods cooking who was in full charge of the camp culinary department. The camp, a big lean-to, redolent with the aromatic odors of newly cut boughs, was in full use, and looked specially restful and inviting to Norman after the fatigues of the journey.

"There's nothing to kill a big appetite that will quite compare with wild-goose beans," declared Eustace, as they sat at supper over plates of baked beans smoking hot from the ground. "When I first went in the woods," he continued, "the big yellow-eye bean was in pretty general use."

"Why do they call these wild-goose beans?" asked Norman.

"Because the original seed was secured from the crops of wild geese. Of that there seems to be no doubt, although, in the old days, it was a matter of much contention as to who had the honor of being the first discoverer of them. There were two claimants, Col. John Goddard of Bangor and Henry K. Robinson of Brewer, both lumbermen. Both claimed to have found the original seed of the small white or pea bean in the crop of a wild goose, and to have developed them in their own gardens. Partisanship used to run high

in the old days, and I do not know as the matter was ever settled. There is a third claimant who has been named in recent years, Isaac Park who lived in Veazie, Maine, about ninety years ago. His descendants say that he secured the original seed of the white bean from the crop of a wild goose, and developed the variety. One of his descendants, a granddaughter who lives in Boston, is said to have in her possession a velvet-lined jewel case in which reposes a bean that was one of the first descendants of those secured from the crop of the wild goose by Mr. Park. It has certainly been a great addition to the bean family, being one that is a hardy grower, and has, moreover, the virtue of maturing early."

"These beans seem to have a wild-goose flavor," laughed Norman. "I think I'll have another plate of them."

"That wild-goose flavor you think you taste comes from the good corn-fed pork that's in them," declared Eustace. "I've concluded," he added, "not to ask you or Fred to stand guard at the dam to-night."

"Don't let me out of anything I ought to do," protested Norman.

"Oh, I lay out to give you chance enough before we're through," responded Eustace, "but I thought it wouldn't be quite safe to start you in until you were in a little better condition to keep awake."

"How many men will you keep on guard duty?"

"Two. One at each end of the dam. I reckon our

Allegash friends will fancy they've struck a hornet's nest if they try to complete their work."

Soon after the guards, armed with Winchester rifles, had been posted, the men turned in for the night, and the cares of Chamberlain dam were speedily forgotten in dreamless slumber.

CHAPTER XV

IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY

"Well, take care of yourselves, boys."

Eustace smiled a little as he gave Norman and Fred this parting admonition, for he knew that there was not a better woodsman for his years in Maine than Fred Warner. Norman, too, had not failed to profit in the lore of the wilderness by his winter at Quadrate Lake.

"We'll try to," returned Warner. "What do you think we'd better do to-day?"

"I'd work out some of the old wood-roads," replied Eustace. "You needn't go too far away. If you find any camp, or any place where camp fires have recently burned, return and let me know at once."

Norman and Warner, in accordance with the general plan outlined by Eustace, were about to start upon a cruise through the woods near Chamberlain dam, to ascertain if possible whether or not any of the enemy were still lurking in that vicinity. Norman carried his double-barreled shot-gun, and Fred Warner, besides his Colt's revolver, was equipped with a Winchester rifle. In addition to these weapons, the boys carried a small belt-axe, a lunch which the cook had put up for them,

a junk of salt pork, a frying-pan and two pint dippers of tin. They were also provided with two fish lines and a few spare hooks.

The warning given by Eustace as they started out was not in a serious vein, for he shared with the boys the belief that their mission, while affording some safeguard against possible surprises, would be essentially a safe and enjoyable outing. Already the men of the crew were inclined to believe that the Allegash forces had been discouraged at the poor prospect of completing the work they had started out to do, and had retired in disgust from the Chamberlain Lake region.

The boys were in high spirits as they made their way down an old logging-road after leaving the camp. The day was clear and balmy. A supply of Sol Soc's evil-smelling insect dope secured them immunity from the attacks of the black flies that swarmed the forest, and, but for this protection, would speedily have taken away the pleasure of their trip. There was a relief from accustomed tasks, a freedom from care and responsibility, that was exhilarating to the boys. They drank in the elixir of the wild-woods atmosphere with buoyant spirits. It was a joy and inspiration to be in such close and sympathetic touch with Nature, the cheer that comes to clear minds and healthy bodies from the life in the open — far away from the haunts of man.

The resinous odors of the deep woods had all the virtues of a tonic. The very atmosphere pulsated with

health and vigor. The spell of the forest was on Fred and Norman. They felt its charm, and yielded to its magic.

Neither spoke for a time. Each was busy with his own reflections, and both were under the impression that they would stand a better chance of success in their quest if they conducted a "still hunt."

Presently, as they were making their way along a ridge where the heavy evergreens had crowded out the undergrowth and nature had carpeted the ground with moss, they heard down the descent to their left, the sound of falling waters. Following it up they came to a brook of clear, cold water leaping down a rocky channel that lay between the hills.

"Looks like a good trout brook," declared Norman.

"We'll very soon know whether it is or not," responded Warner, as he drew a fish-hook and line from his pocket.

"We have plenty of poles at hand, Fred," declared Norman, a little ruefully, "but no bait."

"We'll remedy that in short order," returned Warner, confidently.

He went to a decaying stump a short distance up the slope and began knocking the punky wood to pieces with his axe. In a short time he returned with a handful of large, white grubs.

"Try these," he said. "I've heard that trout prefer them to angleworms."

Norman baited his hook with one of the grubs, and

proceeded to cut a small, slender birch tree, that grew a short distance up the slope, and which was admirably adapted for a fishing-pole. Carefully trimming it he tied his line to it, and dropped his baited hook into a good-sized pool. Almost immediately there was a sharp tug at the line, and Norman could not refrain from a shout of exultation as he snapped a half-pound trout upon the bank.

Dropping his pole, he made haste to secure it before it could wiggle back into the water.

A few moments later, with no little pride, he exhibited his glistening prize, nicely strung upon a crotched birch withe, to Warner, who had returned from a short trip in exploration of the little valley.

"He's a beauty," said Fred, admiringly.

"I didn't have him any too well hooked," explained Norman. "He went clear when he struck the bank, but I got him."

"All is well that ends well," laughed Warner.

"It was certainly so in this case," agreed Norman.

"I'm inclined to think from what I heard going up the ridge that there's a fair-sized waterfall a little ways above here," continued Warner.

"Let's fish up to it," suggested Norman.

"That's a good idea," assented Warner.

The boys made their way slowly up the ravine, testing each promising hole and cascade with their fish-lines. As a result they soon had their birch "stringer" half filled with beautiful brook trout. As they came

over the brow of a boulder-studded knoll an exclamation of delight came from Norman.

"The fairies' glen!" he said.

"You've named it," assented Warner.

The little basin of the hills — one of those spots of rare symmetry of setting that appeal with subtle charm to the sensibilities of all lovers of Nature — was indeed worthy of Norman's description. A gentle, moss-covered slope beneath towering spruce trees constituted its sides, while at its upper end the clear, cold waters of the brook, sparkling in the sunbeams that struggled through the shadowy canopy of the tree-tops, fell with a musical splash into the clear depths of a pool below. To the right of the falls, a short distance up the slope, the waters of a clear, cold spring boiled from a sandy basin and trickled down the hillside to lose themselves in the larger current of the brook.

"I should like to camp right here for a month in this cool, shady little dell," declared Norman, with enthusiasm.

"It is certainly an almost ideal camping spot," acquiesced Warner. "Shouldn't wonder, too, if there were some old whopper trout in that pool."

"We'll test it out," said Norman, as he cast his line in the foamy waters. A moment later he had a three-quarters-pound trout squirming at the end of his line.

"Isn't he a whale?" he gasped, with enthusiasm.

"No," laughed Fred. "He's only a brook trout, but an unusually good one."

Norman added the beautiful trout to his already good string, and then began slowly unwinding his fish-line from the end of his pole.

"I don't imagine that Billy Eustace sent us out here to go fishing," he said, with a sigh.

"I guess he won't mind what little we've done," said Fred. "Anyway we can plan to comé back here and eat our dinner. I'll pack those trout in moss to keep the flies away from them, and we won't need to bother with much of our lunch."

"I could eat trout twenty-one times a week, and never grow tired of them," asserted Norman, confidently.

"You might change your mind a little after you'd tried it a month or two," laughed Warner.

A few minutes later they were once more tramping the wood-road.

"I think we had better work out to the right of this road to Eagle Lake," said Warner. "Then we'll circle back here, and have our trout dinner in the fairies' glen. This afternoon we can swing off to the left, and work down to the shore of Chamberlain Lake. I feel very sure that if any of the Allegash men are hanging around here to complete the work they undertook to do when they dynamited the dam, they are somewhere in this stretch of country between Chamberlain and Eagle lakes."

"What makes you think so?" asked Norman, doubtfully.

"They'd want to be within comfortable striking distance, I should suppose."

"How far does Chamberlain Lake extend above the dam at the outlet?"

"About three miles, I should judge from the map. I've never been there."

"That wouldn't be much of a tramp for trained woodsmen, would it?"

"No," admitted Warner, "still I don't think there's one of them so fond of exercise that he would care to walk any miles that he didn't think were necessary."

"Perhaps you're right," conceded Norman.

During the rest of the morning the boys tramped faithfully over the woods between Eagle and Chamberlain Lakes. They were not successful in finding any traces of the Allegash men; but Norman was fortunate enough on their way back to shoot a large Canadian lynx, so that they felt that their tramp was not wholly in vain.

"Another rug, I suppose," remarked Fred, as Norman triumphantly shouldered this trophy of his skill.

"Yes," laughed Norman, "if I can get Sol or Barney to prepare this skin for me."

Soon after, at Fred's suggestion, he removed the skin of the big cat, and hid it in a stump by the roadside, intending to secure it, later in the day, on their way back to the camp.

Noon found them back in the fairies' glen. Here, leaning their guns against a big spruce that grew part

way up the mossy slope, the boys devoted themselves to the task of preparing their dinner. A brisk fire was kindled between two parallel piles of rock, the trout were dressed and washed in the clear waters of the brook, and while Norman went to the spring to fill their tin dippers with its water, Warner busied himself with cooking the savory fish in the frying-pan with long, thin slices of the salt pork.

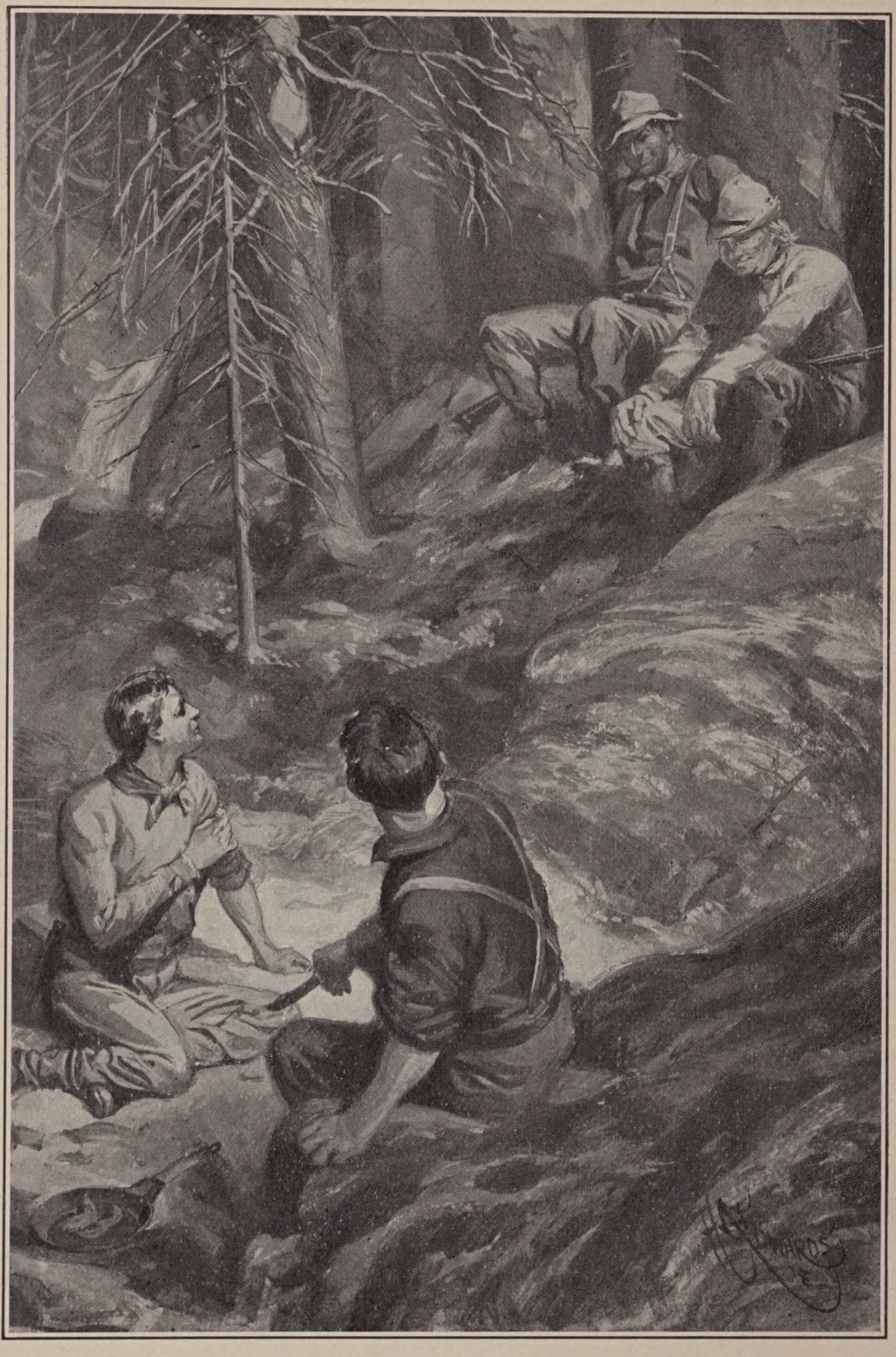
Using pointed sticks for forks, the boys speared the sizzling fish from the frying-pan, and supplementing them with some biscuits from their lunches, gave themselves up to the enjoyment of their meal with the keen relish that comes from woods appetites.

"You're as good a cook as Felix," laughed Norman. "These trout are delicious; done to the queen's taste."

"Sure!" broke in a deep voice. "There's nothing like 'em; but don't ye think it's a trifle hoggish not to' pass 'em 'round?"

Norman and Fred ceased eating and with amazed and startled faces turned their heads in the direction of the voice. For a moment they stood staring at the sight that met their gaze, scarcely able to credit the evidence of their senses; but there was no mistaking the harrowing vision that confronted them. The speaker was big Gusty Peters, and seated beside him on the mossy hillside, his dark, coarse features relaxed in a triumphant grin, was Black Jake Jasper.

Instinctively both boys looked for their guns; but they were gone. Then they saw what they had not at



"Don't ye think it's a trifle hoggish not to pass 'em 'round?" — *Page 188.*

first noticed, that they were in the possession of their unwelcome visitors. Norman's shot-gun lay beside Jasper, and Peters was holding Warner's Winchester across his lap.

"Scooped! by Jimmy, scooped!" laughed the big Allegash leader, with very evident enjoyment of the situation. "We was afeared they might go off 'n' hurt ye while ye was a-eatin' o' them trout," he explained, with a satisfied chuckle. "It's mighty careless o' Eustace to allow kids like you to go traipsin' through the woods with rale guns," he continued, with an affable grin. "What ye say to thet 'ere proposition, Jake?"

"It's simply scandalous," agreed Jasper.

"Have ye got a license to hunt?" continued Peters, pointing a big, pudgy forefinger at Norman.

"No," admitted Norman.

"Are ye a resident of Maine?"

"No. My home is in Boston."

"Are ye a registered guide?" demanded the big Allegash boss, pointing an accusing finger at Warner.

"Certainly not," returned Fred, with spirit.

"Criminals! Lawbreakers! both on ye!" roared Peters. "This Boston feller comes down here without any license to hunt, an' you undertake for t' guide him without any license t' guide. What ye say to thet, Jake?"

"Both on 'em liable," responded Jasper, with emphasis.

"Here you! drop thet!" shouted Peters, as Fred's hand reached for the revolver in his belt. "Don't try any capers on us, youngster. If ye do I warn ye it will be wuss for ye. It's bad enough for ye to be a-rampaging through the woods a-breakin' o' the game laws, without undertakin' to resist an officer."

"An officer!" gasped Norman, incredulously.

"Sartin," responded Peters, coolly. "I'm the game warden for this 'ere section, and here I've ketched ye both red-handed. I arrest ye both. I reckon I'll have to take ye afore a trial justice an' have ye bound over for trial et the next term o' the supreme joodicial court."

"It's no use to bluff," declared Warner. "You're no more a game warden than I am, and if you were we haven't broken any law."

"What should be done with a knowin' kid whose head gits too big for his hat, Jake?" asked Peters, turning to his companion.

"Cut off his ears!" returned Jasper, solemnly.

"Ye hear thet, do ye?" said Peters, addressing Warner.

"Yes."

"Well, bub, ye'd better govern yourself accordin' if ye know when ye're well off. Don't ye think so, sonny?" he asked, turning to Norman. "It doesn't pay for youngsters to get too flip, ye know," he added.

"I recognize this bluff of yours for just what it is worth," returned Norman, wrathfully, "but, as we

seem to be in your power, I suppose we'll have to submit to it."

Peters took a large envelope from his inside coat pocket and tossed it to Norman.

"Read what's in thet, an' see what ye think," he said.

Norman pulled a long official document from the envelope, and read it with amazement. There was no mistake about it. It was a game warden's commission duly made out to R. B. Peters. He passed it to Warner, who read it, with very evident astonishment, and tossed it back to Peters.

"It seems to be straight enough," he said; "but it's nothing to us. We haven't broken any laws."

"Thet's where you're mistaken," insisted Peters. "We've caught ye in th' act. I rally haven't any choice in th' matter, boys. I must arrest ye an' take ye before the nighest trial justice. I can't do anything else. I've gin my oath t' enforce th' laws, an' I can't go back on it. I'd be powerful glad to scold ye a little, an' let ye off, boys; but ye see I can't do it. I think ye was both green an' didn't know what ye was a-doin', but thet wouldn't excuse me for lettin' of ye off, would it, Jake?"

"Not on yer life. It would be malfeasance in office, an' would sartinly lay ye liable," asserted Jasper, solemnly.

"I hope the co'rt will show ye mercy, I do, by gum!" continued Peters, with apparent sincerity. "I'll say

a good word for ye; but Jake is right erbout it. I can't go back on my oath o' office, can I, Jake?"

"In course not," responded Jake.

"Now, boys, I've got irons in my pocket," continued Peters, "but if you'll gin me yer word ye won't try t' run away, but'll walk along peaceable between me an' Jake, I won't use 'em."

"We'll do that," agreed Norman, "but of course you'll send word about our arrest to the camp?"

"Sartin. I'll let Jake go back to-night as soon as we reach the place where we're goin' t' camp an' tell Billy jest what hes happened. You'll sure want some one to defend ye? You'd jest as soon go, wouldn't ye, Jake?"

"Sure," answered Jake, with a grin. "Be glad to."

"Now I guess we'd better help ye eat them trout," continued Peters, "but fust, perhaps ye'd better toss me thet belt ye wear," he added, with a nod at Warner.

Very reluctantly Fred removed his belt and tossed it to Peters, who threw it over his shoulder after an unsuccessful attempt to buckle it around his ample waist. "I've no doubt," he said, "th' co'rt will return this property of your'n in due time, won't it, Jake?"

"Gen'ally does," responded Jasper.

"Ye see I want t' be fair with ye, boys," said Peters, in his most conciliatory tone. "I'm willin' to do all for ye thet th' law will justify me in doin'. I recognize as how th' co'rt may not regard ye as severely as if ye'd actually killed a deer or a moose, while a-rangin'

through the woods o' this 'ere section in this illegal manner."

"Perhaps they hev'," suggested Black Jake. "They may hev' it hid away in some place."

"Sure," said Peters. "Thet may all be; but until we find it we shall hev' no evidence of it. I reckon we'll hold 'em only on the charge we can back up. And now," he continued, "let's turn to an' help th' boys punish them trout."

CHAPTER XVI

THE CAMP OF GUSTY PETERS

"We'd better be movin' on," announced Peters, when the last trout had been disposed of. "There doesn't seem to be anything but th' fryin'-pan for us t' clean," he added.

He took the grease-lined utensil in his hand, and, stepping to the side of the brook, pulled a large sod from a short stretch of overhanging bank. With this he vigorously scoured the inside of the pan, swirling his sod round and round with muscular vigor. When he had finished he tossed the remnants of the sod away, and rinsed the frying-pan in the brook.

"Clean, ain't she?" he asked, holding it up to Warner for inspection.

"Yes," was the astonished reply. "It shines."

"Nothin' like a good sod t' clean a greasy fryin'-pan with," declared Peters. "Now pack up, an' let's be goin'."

"See here," said Norman, desperately, as they tramped along after their burly captor, with Black Jake Jasper bringing up the rear, "I don't want you to imagine that we're as green as you take us to be. I know very well that we have broken no law, and

you know it also. You have another motive for this bogus arrest, and you mustn't think for a moment that we do not know what it is."

"Tut! tut! sonny," remonstrated Peters. "Ye mustn't blame me. It ain't very pleasant t' have t' arrest two sech handsome youngsters es you an' your chum here; but I've taken an oath t' enforce the law an' I must do my duty, mustn't I, Jake?"

"You surely must," responded Jasper, in tones of solemn conviction.

"An' I've even offered t' do what I could t' help ye out with the jedge, ye ongrateful critter," continued Peters, indignantly. "What d'ye think o' thet, Jake?"

"Wouldn't help 'em at all arter thet," declared Jasper. "I'd let 'em sweat."

"Ye mustn't be too hard on 'em, Jake," remonstrated Peters, in a magnanimous tone. "Remember they're only boys — probably ignorant o' th' law — though thet doesn't excuse any one for breakin' of it — an' nachally feelin' jest a little cheap t' think they're been ketched in sech a scrape. Don't blame ye a bit, boys! I swanny I'd feel jest thet way myself, if I was in your place. Wouldn't you, Jake?"

"I sartin should," agreed Jasper.

"We'll take our medicine without any molasses, if you please," retorted Warner, resentfully.

Peters turned about with an ominous scowl.

"Don't ye go for t' gittin' sassy, bub," he growled. "If ye do, I'll gin ye a good sound larrupin'. Don't

ye borry no trouble. Th' law doesn't oblige any officer t' take back talk from a prisoner, does it, Jake?"

"Never!" asserted Jasper, with emphasis. "Oil o' birch is a legal remedy in them cases."

"An' one es gin'ally does the business," added Peters, grimly.

"Where are you taking us?" demanded Norman.

"Along one o' Tom Bowker's ole loggin'-roads," responded Peters.

"I'm glad to know it's Bowker's," responded Norman, "but that doesn't fully answer my question."

"An officer isn't expected to tell all his plans to a prisoner," said Peters, with wrinkled brows. "Still, seein' as you're a boy an nachally curious, I'll be decent with ye, an' tell ye. I'm a-takin' of ye back to the abode o' men, away from th' hants o' th' moose, 'n' th' deer, an' the —"

"Wild, woolly bear," chuckled Jasper.

Peters threw back his head, and gave vent to a loud and hearty guffaw, at this unexpected burst of humor.

"You beat th' Dutch, Jake!" he gasped, admiringly. "Most original cuss ye ever saw," he added, to the boys.

"So we've observed," said Warner, dryly.

"Lemme see, what was I a-sayin' when Jake trotted in thet woolly bear? Oh, yes! I was a-tellin' of ye where I was a-layin' out t' take ye. We're headed for th' land o' courts, an' jedges an' jails, an' I don't keer how soon we git thar."

"You don't expect to make it to-night, do you?" asked Norman.

"No, we don't shake th' big woods es easy es thet," returned Peters, with an indulgent chuckle. "Shouldn't be a mite surprised if it took us the best part of a week or ten days. It's 'bout a hundred an' twelve miles from Eagle Lake to Fort Kent, although a canoe slips along in fairly good water most o' the way."

"That's what they call the Allegash trip, isn't it?" asked Norman.

"Yes, all th' waters 'round here, includin' them o' Chamberlain Lake, belong to th' Allegash system," declared Peters, sharply.

"But they don't flow that way?" said Warner.

"Makes no diff'rence whar they flow now," retorted Peters, gruffly. "Th' fact I've stolen an' used something es belongs t' somebody else doesn't make it mine, does it? I'll allow," he hastened to add, as if to avoid all possible argument, "thet it was pretty nigh es easy for the Chamberlain Lake waters t' flow south es it was for 'em t' flow north. Chamberlain is eleven hundred feet above sea level, an' marks th' highest pint in Maine's Lake country."

"It's like a pond on a hill-top," interposed Black Jake. "Jest 'bout es easy for th' water t' run off one side es t'other."

"Who is to decide whar the waters shall flow?" demanded Peters, with a theatrical show of solemnity. He paused for effect. "It's the Lord!" he announced,

with ponderous gravity. "What d'ye say, Jake?"

"It sartin is," agreed Jasper.

"Now," continued Peters, "th' Lord ordained thet th' waters o' Chamberlain Lake should flow north into the Allegash. I'll allow 'twasn't no great trick t' make 'em flow south into the East Branch; but I hold thet no man hes a right t' change th' plans o' th' Almighty."

"Perhaps the Lord made the Canadians put an unjust tax on the American logs driven down the St. John River; and then again perhaps He took away the Chamberlain Lake waters to punish them for doing it," responded Warner, with spirit.

It was evident that this view of the matter was somewhat disconcerting to Peters.

"Shet up, kid!" he ordered, angrily. "What ye don't know 'bout this matter would fill a couple o' dictionaries. Jest bear in mind thet me an' Jake hev lived in this world a considerable longer spell than you have, an' know a heap more things about this country."

"I wouldn't discuss that subject with him, Fred," interposed Norman. "No good can come of it, can there, Jake?" he added, turning quickly to Jasper.

"Sartin not," returned Jasper. "Heh! — er, wal — or what?" he stammered in confusion, as it suddenly dawned upon him that he was not echoing Gusty Peters. "Jest like shakin' a red flag et a bull," he added, lamely.

The giant of the Allegash burst into one of his roaring bellows of laughter.

"Wal — wal," he gasped. "Thet's sartin rich. Ketched ye thet time, Jake, sure es preachin'," he added, with a chuckle. "Set fire! but you're a cute one," he added, to Norman, turning his head for a mirthful glance in his direction.

"I noticed that his negative was hung on a hair trigger," explained Norman.

"It was only an echo!" added Warner.

"Shet up! or I'll cuff ye out," growled Jasper, resentfully, as another half-smothered snicker floated back from Peters.

"'Little boys without a beard
Should be seen, but never hear'd,'"

he quoted, sternly.

"So you are going to take us to Fort Kent, are you?" said Norman to Peters in an attempt to change the conversation, which, he perceived, was getting on dangerous ground.

"I allow es how we'd better," responded Peters. "Thet's 'bout th' nighest court, an' then there's the telegraph t' notify yer friends with, an' the railroad t' fetch 'em to ye. I want ye t' know thet I intend t' deal square with ye. I want ye t' hev a fair show."

"You're very kind, I'm sure," responded Norman.

"I've got a heart in me big es an ox," asserted Peters, in a burst of confidence. "Hev'n't I, Jake?"

"Big es two on 'em," corroborated Jasper, promptly.

"You said it was about one hundred and twelve miles, did you?" pursued Norman.

"Jest erbout," replied Peters, "but bless ye, I wasn't a-plannin' on makin' ye walk it. We'll slip down the Allegash an' the St. John rivers in a canoe mighty easy and comfortable. Jest like slidin' down hill in winter. Only a mile or two o' carry the hull distance."

As Peters finished speaking, he turned abruptly to the right from the tote-road, and plunged into the woods.

"There's a longer way 'round, but this is th' nighest way home," he announced.

"I should think it was also the roughest one," said Norman, as he followed the bulky leader over dead-falls, and through tangles of undergrowth.

"Don't be a baby!" growled Peters. "A spry youngster like you shouldn't mind a little trip like this, should he, Jake?"

"Sure, n — er — ought to make fun on it," responded Jasper, remembering in time to save himself, the sport that had been occasioned by his ready "no."

"Got the bung in on that just in time," commented Warner, with a grin.

"None o' yer sass," snarled Jasper, resentfully. "If you'd hed a few more trouncin's et home ye'd know enough t' be respectful to yer elders."

Seeing that the temper of the big teamster was rising, Warner wisely forbore to answer him.

Peters, with long, ponderous tread, led the party from the black growth into the matted labyrinth of a

dense cedar swamp, where moss-grown windfalls were heaped up with a wild and promiscuous prodigality of nature that made progress both slow and difficult.

To add to their discomfort swarms of black flies came out of the dark coverts to prey upon them.

"Want some kill-pest?" asked Peters, facing about with a small bottle in his hand. "Oh, ye got some o' your own, hev ye?" he remarked, seeing Norman and Fred smearing their hands and faces with Sol Soc's ointment. "Wal, if it suits ye, all right; but it'll hev t' be th' rale thing if it beats this," he added, returning the bottle to his pocket.

He chuckled softly to himself.

"Never but one on 'em ever bit Jake," he said, "an' he died."

"Why was that?" asked Norman.

"Got his system full o' nicotine," responded Peters, solemnly.

"Wal, if thet's the case they ought not t' pester you," retorted Jasper, "seein' es how I smoke a consider'ble better grade o' tobacco."

"Let you tell it," responded Peters, good-naturedly. "My, but that was tough on fat men," he puffed, as he climbed over a specially big windfall, and paused to rest for a moment. "I'm glad t' say we're through th' wust on it. We'll git more open goin' as we work up on to the ridge," he added.

This assertion proved true. As they advanced the travelling became much better, and presently the black

growth gave way to one of towering birch, beech and maple — primeval growths whose mighty tops shaded the ground to such an extent as to kill out most of the undergrowth, making the walking comparatively easy. They paused for a moment beyond the brow of the ridge to fill their tin dippers from a spring of clear, cold water.

From this point their way lay down a sharp incline and across a boggy meadow thickly studded with tussocks of sphagnum moss, which shook under their feet as they stepped carefully from one to the other. Through the center of the meadow crept the slow current of a dark, sluggish stream, over which they made their way on a log which served as a bridge.

"'Most there," announced Peters, as he led the way up the steep bank along a narrow trail which wound its tortuous way into the sombre shadows of a heavy black-growth. Here the trees were of a considerable size, and stood closely together. It was a dark way under the most favorable circumstances, and was depressing in its suggestiveness of brooding mystery and unseen dangers. Even Gusty Peters hastened his steps, as if he were not disposed to linger longer than necessary on this part of the journey.

Presently the way grew lighter, and they soon emerged into a good-sized clearing, which stood at the foot of a gently sloping ridge, the upper part of which was covered with hard wood growth. About midway of this clearing was a long, low camp of

unpeeled logs, which had evidently been used as a woods camp by some lumber operator.

At the foot of the ridge a brook bubbled noisily over a stony bed, near the bank of which, a short distance from the camp, was a big, boiling spring.

"Ye thought th' water we got back a piece was pretty good," said Peters, as they paused for a drink, "but it wasn't in it with this. I tell ye this 'ere water is th' genuine elixir o' life, ain't it, Jake?"

"It air, for sure," responded Jasper, promptly.

"Well, let's go in an' see th' camp," continued Peters, as he led the way up an old tote-road which crossed the brook on a corduroy bridge, and found a terminus between the camp and the horse hovel facing it.

Arriving at the camp, the big Allegash boss pulled open the door of rough cleated boards and passed within, followed by Norman and Fred, with Black Jake bringing up in the rear.

Two swarthy-faced men were holding down the deacon seat, solemnly smoking black corn-cob pipes. They looked up with a nod of greeting, but made no comment, though they eyed the boys with very evident surprise and curiosity.

"Two youngsters I arrested for breakin' th' game laws," explained Peters. "Ketched 'em in th' act."

"Of eating their dinners," added Norman.

The face of Gusty Peters assumed an ominous scowl.

"Don't try to be peart, youngster, if ye don't want them ears o' your'n pulled," he began, sternly.

"They're surely long enough already," interposed Jasper.

"I meant just what I said," roared Peters, in thunderous tones. "I ketched ye both a-breakin' o' th' game laws. Now ye might as well quit disputin' of me. I want t' use ye fair; but I won't be sassed by any one."

Norman did not reply, and presently Peters's displeasure passed away with a suddenness that suggested the origin of the name "Gusty" by which he was known among the woodsmen and river drivers.

"Make yourselves t' hum, boys," he said, hospitably. "I can't hev ye go outside alone; but I don't want t' tie ye up in here."

Black Jake Jasper, having lighted his pipe, had taken his place on the deacon seat beside the door, and it was evident that escape in that direction was effectually cut off.

"Ye can hev th' whole run o' camp," said Peters, affably.

Thus admonished, Norman and Fred improved the opportunity to inspect the rude structure. It had evidently consisted originally of a men's camp and a cook's camp connected by an intervening dingle. This, however, had been walled in and provided with a floor of hewn logs to serve as a dining-room.

"We fixed this since we've been here," explained Peters. "It got a trifle sultry t' eat in the cook's camp."

Beyond the dining-room was the kitchen, over which presided a slight young Frenchman with smiling face and nervous manner. He greeted the boys with a cordial "Bonjour," and went on with his work.

"A jumper," whispered Peters.

Norman raised his brows.

"I don't allow the boys t' pester 'im," added Peters, "an' I reckon thet's why he sticks with me. He's a tolerable good grub artist."

All three buildings which were under one roof, were very low, and the only light that came to them was through the roof where half a dozen 6x9 window sashes were made to do duty as skylights.

There was a row of double bunks — one above the other — on one side of the men's camp; but, as only a small section in the upper one was provided with fresh boughs, it seemed evident that Peters's crew was not a large one.

"Did you build this camp?" asked Norman.

"No," replied Peters. "This is old Cain Fenton's camp. He operated here a year ago last winter."

"Are you operating here this summer?" asked Norman, pointedly.

The big boss laughed, indulgently.

"No, sonny," he said, good-naturedly. "This is the crew that is going to clean up our Eagle Lake rear drive. It doesn't take much of a crew t' handle it since the East Branch fellers with their big tramway began a-stealin' of our logs, es well as our water."

"Didn't know you had any rear drive here," said Warner. "Thought you boomed across with a tug-boat."

"We do on th' lake," admitted Peters. "I was a-meanin' of our brook drives."

"Haven't you got 'em out yet?"

"Mostly. A few odds an ends t' clean up. Ought to finish up in four or five days. Then I can take ye down t' Fort Kent. I don't rally see es how I can get away afore. Jake," he ordered, turning to Jasper. "Git an early supper an' go back t' Chamberlain dam an' tell Billy Eustace what's happened t' th' boys."

"I think I'd best go now," responded Jasper, as he gave up his seat to one of the Frenchmen and passed into the cook's camp, closely followed by Peters.

A few minutes later both men returned. Black Jake put on his hat and passed out of doors.

"He's a long-legged critter, an' can make good time," said Peters. "Perhaps ye'll sleep a little sounder to-night t' know thet Billy an' his men ain't worryin' erbout ye."

THE TAIL END OF THE DRIVE — THE COOK'S BATTEAU AND SUPPLY BOAT. — *Page 206.*

CHAPTER XVII

A MIDNIGHT CONFERENCE

"Bean on tab'. Tea all hot," announced the cook two hours later, putting his head through the doorway that led from the men's camp to the dining-camp.

"That means all of us," declared Peters, rising from his seat with alacrity.

"Now, boys," he continued, addressing Norman and Fred, when they were seated at the rough table with its oilcloth cover, "pitch right in an' help yourselves. Ye needn't stan' on ceremony. If ye want anything ye can't reach, holler."

It was a coarse but substantial meal the cook had prepared for them, consisting of hot baked beans, prune sauce, cream of tartar biscuits of mammoth size, twisted molasses doughnuts, and steaming hot tea. Norman and Fred had developed sharp appetites by their long tramp and did not fail to do ample justice to the meal, to the evident satisfaction of Gusty Peters.

"Glad t' see ye eat so hearty," he said, cordially. "Ye must keep up good sperits, both on ye. I reckon you'll come out o' this scrape all right. I've no idee the jedge will be hard on ye — seein' es how it's yer fust offense. I cal'late he'll gin ye a small fine."

"I hope you're right," declared Norman.

"Hev'n't much doubt 'bout it myself," responded Peters, heartily. "Do ye smoke?"

"No," responded both boys in chorus.

"Glad t' hear it," said Peters, approvingly. "It's a mighty bad habit fer youngsters t' git into."

When the men had finished their supper, and returned to the deacon seat in their quarters, they proceeded to fill their black pipes and flood the apartment with the acrid fumes of vile-smelling tobacco smoke.

"There's one good thing erbout this kind of an atmosphere," observed Peters, as he blew long whiffs from his pipe. "The mosquitoes show no disposition t' pester us."

"Ba golly! wan two — mebby more — com' in firs' night. Dey die prattee queeck," added one of the Frenchmen.

"Thet's jest what they did," corroborated Peters.

For a time the men smoked in silence, the topics of conversation apparently being exhausted.

Presently the door swung open to admit the tall form of Black Jake Jasper.

"Well, Jake, what luck?" demanded Peters, as the elongated teamster tossed his hat upon the upper bunk and seated himself upon the deacon seat.

"I saw Billy Eustace," responded Jasper.

"An' what did he say?"

"He said he didn't believe any jedge in Maine would hold th' boys on sech a charge," responded Jake. "He

seemed quite riled up about it. He said it was impossible for him or any on his men t' git away now, bein' es he was short-handed anyway, an' hed th' dam now jest whar they couldn't leave it. He said for us to git Major Dixson t' defend th' boys when we got t' Fort Kent, an' tell 'im he'd be responsible for th' bills. He told me t' tell th' boys t' take things cool an' not worry. I guess thet's 'bout th' whole on it," concluded Jasper with evident relief, as he paused, lit the pipe he had been filling during the recital, and lapsed into a moody silence.

"'Bout what I supposed," commented Peters. "Billy hes got a good-sized job on his hands an' must attend t' it, if he gits thet dam fixed. I never believed it ought t' ben put thar in the fust place; but it's thar, an' it's bad business t' be a-cuttin' up capers with it et this late day. I think a heap o' Billy Eustace," he continued. "Hed a little scrap with him an' his men comin' up, but it never'd 'a' happened if some on us hedn't 'a' ben drinkin'. Don't ye ever tech liquor, boys," he added, earnestly. "It steals away a man's brains an' makes an ass o' him. Here's Jake here might 'a' ben Gov'nor o' Maine, if he'd let th' stuff alone."

"An' how 'bout you?" snapped Jasper, who was apparently in no mood to enjoy Peters's attempt at pleasantry.

"Me?" responded Peters, complacently. "Wal, I reckon a cabinet job would 'a' ben jest erbout my size."

"I allus did love a modest man," responded Jasper, with sarcasm.

The two Frenchmen laughed uproariously; but Peters was in nowise disturbed.

"Scored thet time, Jake, sure es preachin'," he conceded, good-naturedly. "Tired, boys?" he added, turning to Norman and Fred.

"I guess we can stand it a while longer," answered Norman.

"It's no use t' go t' bed until ye can go t' sleep," said Peters. "Ye'd much better sit up with the rest on us."

There was little conversation during the rest of the evening, the men smoking their pipes in stoical silence, and apparent preoccupation. At nine o'clock the lights were put out, and they all turned in for the night. Norman and Fred lay on the upper bunk, upon some clean blankets and freshly cut boughs, next to the log partition which imperfectly divided the men's camp from the eating-camp. The chinking between the logs had dropped away in several places, enabling them to get an excellent view of the cook as, by the light of several kerosene lamps suspended from the ribs of his camp, he closed up his evening's work.

It was the first time the boys had been given an opportunity to talk over the situation since their capture by Gusty Peters and Black Jake Jasper. They hastened to improve it, talking in low whispers so as not to arouse the men.

"What do you think of it, Fred?" asked Norman.

"I don't know what to think," confessed Warner. "I felt confident at first that it was a great big bluff; but now I'm not so sure of it."

"That fellow is undoubtedly a game warden," declared Norman. "He's got the papers to show for it; but I don't believe he'd ever have arrested us on any such a flimsy charge if he hadn't had some other motive than a sense of duty for doing it."

"I never heard of any one being arrested for breaking the game laws under such circumstances," said Fred. "It's simply preposterous, and Gusty Peters knows it as well as you and I do."

"That's what I think," said Norman. "Meanwhile we must put our wits to work, and plan to get away. Do you think you could find your way back to Chamberlain dam?"

"I haven't any doubt of it," declared Fred, confidently.

"We'll have to keep our eyes and ears wide open," declared Norman.

"Yes — sure," responded Warner, drowsily.

For a few moments Norman lay awake turning over in his mind the events of the day, and then fell as soundly asleep as his companion.

He was awakened, a little past midnight, by the sound of voices talking in subdued tones in the eating-camp. Looking cautiously through a hole between the chinking, he saw that a dim kerosene lamp burned on

the long table, at the foot of which was Gusty Peters facing a tall, smoothly-shaven man of middle age, whose sallow complexion and long, white hands indicated that he had participated in little if any of the hard physical work of the woods life.

It was evident that the newcomer was not in a pleasant frame of mind.

"You might just as well recognize, Peters, that the game is up, and get back to your work," he said, sharply. "You must remember, now and hereafter, that I never sanctioned this scheme of yours. You've made a sorry mess of it, and now you'd better quit and clear out."

"I'll win out yet," responded Peters, doggedly. "You may be as virtuous as you like, Mr. Falkenham. We never intended to draw you into this matter anyway."

"But if you were bound to carry out this purpose of yours why didn't you do so the very next night, when Sam Wilkins must have been alone at the dam?"

"Thet's jest what we started out to do," declared Peters, sullenly; "but afore we got out o' the blackgrowth path beyond here we run afoul of a ghost."

"A ghost?" repeated Falkenham, incredulously.

"Thet's what it was," asserted Peters, calmly. "It was ole Death himself. I saw him, and so did the others, jest es plain es I see you."

"Bosh!" retorted Falkenham, impatiently. "Did he carry his scythe?" he asked, with a sneer.

"I couldn't say for sure," responded Peters, who was evidently nettled at the disbelief of his auditor, "but one thing I know, he had the sneth. I saw it in his hands. I didn't care to see whether it carried th' steel or not. I make no bones o' sayin' thet I wasn't hankerin' t' investigate."

"Peters, I'm astonished at you," said Falkenham, contemptuously. "I didn't dream that there was anything on earth that you were afraid of. You probably saw a stump."

"Stump!" snorted Peters, resentfully. "Don't ye s'pose I've worked in the woods long enough to know a stump when I see it? Stumps don't walk, nor hev voices. The ole feller we saw could skim along th' ground without tetchin' it, an' hed a voice like th' day o' jedgment. I wasn't goin' t' let th' boys know I was skeered; but I don't mind tellin' ye thet it made th' goose-flesh stan' out all over me."

"What did he look like?" demanded Falkenham, skeptically.

"You've seen them pictures of ole Death with the scythe, hev'n't ye?"

"Yes."

"Wal, thet was him," declared Peters, with conviction. "Th' very same feller."

"Humph!" grunted Falkenham.

"Ye needn't believe it if ye don't want to," said Peters, irritably, "but what I'm a-tellin' ye's true, every word on it. There was five on us started out

together — me 'n' Jake an' th' three Frenchmen. I allowed t' hev Jake an' one o' th' Frenchmen keep Wilkins busy, an' lead him a chase, while me an' t'other two, who would be hid near-by, would steal out when things was ripe, an' finish up our job. I tell ye I was goin' t' give her a charge thet would fetch her thet time fer good an' all. Wal, jest es we got 'bout half way along thet path through th' black-growth th' moon came out of a cloud an' lit up th' way. It was right then we see a sight thet lifted our hair. Stan'in' down th' path, not more'n two or three rods away was ole Death himself."

"Sho!" said Falkenham, with interest.

"He was tall 'n' thin es a skeleton, an' he hed th' flesh of a corpse," continued Peters, ignoring the interruption. "He hed long white hair an' a white beard thet come nigh to his knees. He skipped towards us a ways without tetchin' of the ground. His eyes burned like two coals o' fire. Then he rested his scythe on th' ground, pointed his skeleton forefinger straight et us an' screamed 'Accursed! accursed!' in a voice thet wasn't human. It grew in a graveyard. An' then he vanished — yes, sir! Went out o' sight quicker'n a flash."

"And the men were frightened?" said Falkenham, interrogatively.

"Scared blue. Never see nothin' like it. Black Jake Jasper, one o' the nerviest men I ever knew, jumped up an' down an' hollered like a loon. I thought

for sure he'd gone daffy. It jest made my blood run cold. An' them Frenchmen? Wal, don't say a word! They sartin thought their last day hed come, an' was a-rollin' on th' ground a-moanin' an' a-prayin'."

"So you thought you wouldn't go on, did you?" asked Falkenham.

"We couldn't," declared Peters. "I was glad enough to git thet gang back t' camp. Hed t' boot th' whole on 'em afore I could do it. I saw plainly thet them Frenchmen would never be any more good t' me. There wasn't ary one on 'em thet would ever grow agin. Me an' Jake went t' bed an' pretended t' sleep; but they sot up all night on the deacon seat with their teeth a-chatterin' like a gale o' wind. I was convinced in th' mornin' thet it wouldn't be the slightest use t' keep them Frenchmen any longer, so I hustled 'em back t' th' drive an' told 'em t' send me up Barbotte an' Poulin. I threatened 'em good if they mentioned ghost to either one on 'em, an' I reckon they didn't or I'd 'a' heard suthin' erbout it."

"And is Jake dependable?" inquired Falkenham, in a tone of doubt.

"I think so — now," responded Peters. "I see he felt a little sheepish th' next mornin' an' so I joshed 'im erbout it. Reckon he'd stan' his ground next time if we should ever run across thet critter agin, which I don't think we shall."

"Do you know what I think?" demanded Falkenham, sharply.

"I hev'n't the slightest idee," admitted Peters.

"That you were a pack of cowards, without either courage or horse sense. If that apparition were alive, five big, strong men should have been able to handle him. If he were dead, he couldn't hurt you anyway."

"It's all very well to say thet, Mr. Falkenham," complained Peters. "It's mighty easy for any man t' be brave under sartin conditions. It's the onexpected and the mysterious thet startles an' skeers us. I reckon your back hair'd stiffen up a bit if ye was t' run on t' a thing like thet in the woods arter dark."

"I'd never give it another thought," declared Falkenham. "I have no doubt it was merely an optical delusion. Had you been drinking?"

"Nary a drop."

"Well, depend upon it, there was nothing in it. What are you going to do with those boys?"

"Hold 'em here until we either complete our job on the dam or give it up."

"They're apt to be a couple of white elephants on your hands," said Falkenham, nervously. "Is one of them named Carver?"

"Yes."

"Well, he's a son of General Carver, a leading lawyer of Boston, and a very wealthy man. If he starts out to gun you, there'll be something doing, and don't you forget it. He's an old fighter from the drop of the hat."

"Wal, I hev'n't any idee o' hurtin' th' boys; but

I want t' keep 'em out of our way for a few days. I don't think they'll make us much trouble. They think they're under arrest for a-violatin' of the game laws. I told 'em I was a game warden. I've handled 'em kind o' easy, fer I wanted t' keep 'em es quiet es possible. I even put up a bluff o' hevin' Black Jake go over t' Chamberlain dam, an' report th' scrape they was in t' Billy Eustace. He pertended t' fetch back word from Billy for 'em to keep cool, an' arrangements would be made for Major Dixson to defend 'em when they come to trial et Fort Kent. Ye see I brought along my brother's commission es warden which came arter he left home. I was intendin' t' give it t' him et Churchill Lake, but he had a call to look up some moose scrape over Island Pond way, an' so I missed him. Ye ought t' hev' seen them boys when I flashed thet 'ere docyment on 'em. They swallowed the whole thing, bait, hook, an' sinker," he added, with a chuckle.

"Perhaps they did, and perhaps they didn't," responded Falkenham, doubtfully. "You're a good deal like a cow in a quagmire, Peters. You keep getting in deeper and deeper all the time. Don't you know that you've laid yourself doubly liable by this transaction — first for impersonating an officer, and again for kidnapping? I don't like it."

"Perhaps ye'd better git out o' this country an' take no chances," suggested Peters, impatiently.

"That's precisely what I intend to do," replied Falkenham, coolly. "I'm only sorry now that I came

here at all. Can't you see that your chances are all gone; that Eustace has a bigger force than you, and that you don't stand a ghost of a chance to get at the dam again? This very escapade of yours in taking the boys was about the most foolish break you could possibly have made. They could have circled about the woods for weeks and never found this camp; but when Sol Soc gets out to hunt them it's liable to be a very different story."

"What, is the Injun with Eustace?" asked Peters, uneasily.

"That's what I heard to-day," said Falkenham. "How long do you suppose it will be before Eustace sends him and other men out to hunt for the boys? He's got force enough from what I hear to spare a few good men and still keep up his work on the dam."

"Perhaps they'll all stop work and go t' huntin'," suggested Peters. "If they do it won't be so hard to get at the dam."

"Eustace won't neglect the dam. But he'll be pretty sure to send out some of his men to look for the boys," returned Falkenham.

"It will be worse for any on 'em if they come foolin' 'round this clearin'," growled Peters.

"Depend upon it there won't be any fooling when they get here," responded Falkenham. "You'll hear something drop. If you're wise you'll recognize that the jig is up. You're beaten. Give up this job, and get out of this section without any further delay."

"I'm not so easily beaten," declared Peters, doggedly. "I'm somethin' of a bulldog when I get my teeth sot."

"Well, I must be getting back to the lake," said Falkenham, rising. "I'm afraid the boys in the canoe will think I've run away from them."

"Oh, they've drawn her up on the shore an' gone t' sleep under her," rejoined Peters, confidently. "Reckon I'll take a lantern an' go 'long with ye."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ESCAPE OF NORMAN AND FRED

"I'm sorry t' keep ye in, a warm summer day like this," said Peters to Norman and Fred as they left the breakfast table the next morning; "but ye see an officer is held responsible for his prisoners. One of our boys is goin' out this arternoon t' meet a party who are goin' down th' Allegash. If ye'd like t' write some letters he can take 'em out an' git 'em mailed for ye."

"Certainly I would, thank you, and I'm sure you would, Fred," he added, with a significant look at his companion.

"I should be very glad of a chance," responded Warner, promptly.

"Wal, ye'll find writin' materials over th' kitchen door, an' can use th' table in th' eatin'-camp," said Peters. "Ye can take all th' time ye need. It'll probably be arter dinner afore our man gits away."

"All right," responded Norman. "I've got a good deal to write."

"Tell it all," said Peters, good-naturedly. "It will make a mighty interestin' story."

No sooner were they seated together at the big table,

than Norman, making sure that they were not under espionage, related to Fred in a whisper all he had seen and heard the previous night.

"The whole thing is clear enough, now!" exclaimed Warner, when Norman had finished his surprising story. "That big rascal has a good deal of shrewdness along with his short-comings. He thinks he has us completely fooled."

"Yes," assented Norman, "and we want him to keep on thinking so. We must take the first opportunity to escape and warn Eustace."

"It's going to be something of a job to get away, I'm afraid," returned Fred, gloomily. "They won't let us out of sight a minute. Sh-h!—the cook is watching us now."

"Perhaps they'll grow more careless, if we appear to be reconciled," suggested Norman.

"Perhaps," echoed Warner, dubiously. "There's some property that belongs to us," he added, with a glance at the corner of the room where the shot-gun and rifle, which Peters and Jasper had taken from them at the time of their alleged arrest, leaned against the wall. Above them, hanging upon a peg in the camp rib, was Fred's belt and six-shooter.

"Don't you suppose we could get those guns and hold them up?" said Norman.

"No," returned Warner. "Peters has, undoubtedly, removed the cartridges, and besides they are too many for us."

"You're right," admitted Norman. "Strategy in this instance is preferable to open war."

"And now for our letters," said Warner. "Of course Peters hasn't the slightest intention of sending them; but if we failed to write them he would get suspicious at once."

For the next hour both boys scribbled industriously on long letters to General Carver and Mrs. Warner, endeavoring to make them so natural as to convince Peters that they were written in good faith, and yet to mislead him as to the true situation at the dam, by stating that Eustace had twenty-five men in his crew. When they were finished and sealed they were handed over to Peters, who generously volunteered to supply the stamps for them.

For a time the boys sat upon the upper bunk watching a spirited but good-natured sparring match between the two Frenchmen, who were provided with padded boxing gloves somewhat the worse for wear.

It was a rough and tumble contest, with Peters backing one of the contestants, and Black Jake the other.

Norman improved the opportunity, while this rough sport was in progress, to inspect the assortment of personal effects belonging to the men, that hung from the nails driven in the camp ribs. Here and there some aspiring logger had added to the convenience of his bunk by nailing a piece of board or cedar-split to one of the camp ribs near the head of his place in the

upper bunk, forming an inclined shelf for storage purposes. There was such a shelf above the place in the long upper bunk where Gusty Peters had slept, and as Norman surveyed its varied accumulations he noted several tin tobacco boxes among them. Taking advantage of the interest of the men in the fun below, which was growing fast and furious, he worked his way along the upper bunk within reach of the shelf, and, improving a favorable moment, reached out and secured the largest of these tin boxes, dropping it hastily behind the crumpled blankets. A moment later he dumped its contents into a hollow of the bedding. He threw his hat over the little pile of cartridges of various sizes, and apparently became absorbed in the boxing match.

His maneuver had not entirely escaped observation, however, and there was a look of admiration in Fred Warner's eyes as he took his seat on the front of the bunk in such a way as to hide Norman as much as possible from the observation of Gusty Peters and his men. Thus screened, Norman hastened to sort over the cartridges. They were a miscellaneous lot of odds and ends. Among them Norman recognized the two cartridges which had been removed from his shot-gun, seven 30-30's which had evidently been pumped from the magazine of Warner's Winchester, and six shorter cartridges which had been removed from his Colt's revolver. Fred had carried no extra ammunition. Norman had worn a belt in which were a dozen or

more surplus cartridges. This he had placed at his head upon retiring for the night; but in the morning it had disappeared, and Norman felt that the burly boss had taken good care of it. Evidently Peters had felt that no one need fear an unloaded weapon.

Norman carefully stored the cartridges which Peters had taken from him and Warner, in his various pockets. Then, returning the remaining ones to the tin box, he took advantage of a favorable opportunity to replace it in its former position upon the shelf. A feeling of exultation came over him, in the reflection that when again they were in position to get possession of their weapons they would be able to render them effective.

He pushed himself forward and took a seat on the front of the bunk beside Warner, dangling his legs above the deacon seat. Presently the door opened to admit a newcomer, a small, dark-eyed, wiry-looking man, whose skin had been baked and browned to such an extent by exposure to wind and weather, as to give it a distinctly leathery appearance.

There was an immediate shout of recognition and greeting, and the two boxers, glad of an opportunity to forego their strenuous exercise, dropped, with perspiring faces, upon the deacon seat.

"Wal, wal, if here ain't Treffle Serois! Mighty glad t' see ye, ole man," said Peters, as he shook the newcomer's hand with a grip that made him wince. "Come out in the other room a minute," he added, "I want t' hev a little talk with ye."

The two passed out into the eating-camp, and Norman and Fred exchanged significant glances.

In a short time Peters reappeared with Serois, who was armed with the Winchester rifle which had been taken from Warner.

"Now look a-here, boys," said the big boss, pausing in front of Norman and Fred. "I don't mind tellin' of ye thet your presence here hes made us all late in goin' to our work this mornin' an' I can't afford t' pay men t' loaf. Now I'm a-goin' t' leave ye here with Treffle. He hes orders t' use ye well an' gin ye th' run o' th' camp; but if ye try t' escape he'll shoot th' both on ye. Them's his orders, an' ye must govern ye'selves accordin'."

"We're not hunting for trouble," responded Norman, meekly.

"No, I don't reckon ye air," returned Peters, in a gratified tone. "Come on, boys," he added. "Let's get t' work."

He passed out of the camp followed by Black Jake, and the two Frenchmen who had engaged in the sparring match, leaving Norman and Fred alone in the camp with the cook and Treffle Serois.

The wiry little Frenchman watched them for a time with weasel-like intentness. He held his Winchester rifle across his knees in readiness for instant use.

"Let's write some more letters," suggested Norman to Fred. "We've got plenty of time to do it here."

"All right," responded Warner, promptly.

"I t'ink dat prattee good t'ing for do," declared Treffle, in a tone of relief.

The boys passed out into the eating-camp, and were soon to all appearances busily engaged in letter writing. Peeking a little later through a place between the logs where the chinking was out, Norman saw that Serois had leaned his rifle up against the end of the camp, and was smoking his pipe with placid satisfaction.

"He's a mark," he whispered to Fred, confidently.

"Looks like it," agreed Warner. "Go out and entertain the cook," he added, "while I get hold of your shot-gun and my Colt's."

"Bonjour, M'sieu Carvarre," said the smiling cook, cordially, as Norman entered the kitchen.

"Good morning," returned Norman, heartily. "You see I've got a lot of spare time on my hands, just now, and I thought I'd come out, and let you teach me how to cook."

The knight of the kitchen greeted this announcement with a laugh, although it was very evident that he was not a little flattered by the suggestion.

"Ba Joe! I ban ver' poor fellaire for teach you," he said, deprecatingly. "I only do few plain t'ing."

"But you do them wonderfully well," pursued Norman.

"Oh, jus' prattee fair, I gass, me," responded the cook, with evident embarrassment.

"Did you make that nice mince-meat we had in the pies this morning?" inquired Norman.

"No, dat ban Armour; com' een beeg bucket. Lak dis," replied the cook, pulling a large bucket from beneath his cooking shelf. "Dat prattee good t'ing," he added, with evident pride, as he pulled off the cover. "Jus' you tas' heem," he added, handing Norman a big iron spoon.

"It's great stuff," declared Norman, when he had disposed of a generous sample. "Is this all that you have that comes in buckets?"

"No, cranberry sauce, lak dis," answered the cook, pulling out another bucket. "I don' t'ink me dere ban moche cranberry in dat," he said. "Eet ban prattee poor t'ing. Mos' all made out hay-seed an' apple paring."

"It doesn't taste much like cranberry, for sure," admitted Norman, after he had critically eaten a spoonful. "I think you're just right. It's nothing but a compound of apple parings and hay-seed."

"Dat w'at I t'ink," declared the cook, in a gratified tone.

"Well, I guess I might as well go back and finish my letters," declared Norman, as he slowly turned and went back leisurely into the eating-camp.

"Good job!" whispered Warner, approvingly. "You take the seven-shooter and capture Treffle, and I'll follow with the cook. I reckon we'll have to take 'em along a piece with us."

"There's no other way," acquiesced Norman.

"Good luck to you," whispered Warner, as he

slipped the big Colt's revolver into Norman's hand under the table.

Watching his opportunity when the cook was busy at his oven, Norman slipped the weapon under his coat. "I guess I can carry it here, without exciting much suspicion," he said, as he hugged it to his body in the hollow of his arm. "It all depends on perfect co-operation," he whispered, as he rose from the table.

"I reckon I've got the soft end of it," responded Fred; "but you can certainly put up a better bluff than I can."

Norman strolled leisurely into the men's camp, and took a seat near Treffle Serois. The Frenchman gave him a sharp glance, and, evidently satisfied that he was all right, resumed his smoking.

"Throw up your hands!"

Serois looked up with startled glance at Norman, in response to this sharp command, to find himself covered by a Colt's revolver. Almost impulsively he reached toward the Winchester that leaned against the end of the camp.

"Stop!" shouted Norman, peremptorily. "If you touch that rifle, you're a dead man."

Serois hastily withdrew his hand, rose slowly to his feet, and gazed into the muzzle of the Colt's. His face suddenly grew white with fear as he raised both hands above his head.

"Don' shoot on me," he gasped. "My gar! Dat ban beeg lie! Gusty ban tole me dem gun not loaded."

"Well, what do you think about it now?" demanded Norman.

"I see de end dem bullet in ceelynder," returned Treffle, weakly.

"Your eyesight is excellent," said Norman. "Now you may put your hands behind your back," he ordered.

Serois instantly did as directed.

"Step to the side of the camp."

Again Serois obeyed without hesitation. With a sigh of relief Norman stepped forward, and took possession of Warner's Winchester. At this moment the door of the eating-camp was thrown open, and the cook appeared with white face, and hands clasped behind him, while Fred Warner followed close upon his heels with Norman's double-barreled shotgun in his hands.

Norman kicked open the camp door with his foot. "Now march," he said, sternly, and Serois promptly passed out into the clearing. "You may go down the tote-road and across the bridge," commanded Norman.

"Oh, Meester Carvarre!" exclaimed the cook, in tremulous tones, "I deedn't t'ink you go for harm to me."

"Don't you worry," responded Norman. "You do just what we tell you and no harm will come to you."

They made their way down the tote-road, across the corduroy bridge over the brook, and up the opposite bank to the edge of the path that led into the black growth. Here they came to a halt.

"Now," said Norman, addressing the prisoners, "we have no desire to do you any injury; but we're not going to be prisoners any longer. If you will keep your hands clasped behind you, and walk straight back and into the camp, without looking behind you, we won't harm you. If you don't we shall open fire on you."

The prisoners, thus admonished, turned about, and made their way down the hill, across the brook, and up the opposite slope.

"Cut!" whispered Norman, and, turning quickly about, he and Fred sped down the road through the black growth at a furious pace.

Suddenly, as they neared the meadow through which the dead-water wound its sluggish way, they heard voices coming up the bank. They had barely time to dash into the dark woods, and conceal themselves behind a dead-fall, when Gusty Peters and Black Jake Jasper put in an appearance. As the big Allegash boss and his lieutenant walked briskly down the path, a series of frantic shouts came from the direction of the camp.

"By th' Great Horn Spoon! there's suthin' wrong et th' camp," exclaimed Peters, in a startled tone. "Them boys air up t' some caper!"

He broke into a run, and, with Black Jake at his heels, disappeared in the direction of the clearing.

"Skip!" whispered Norman, and in a moment he and Warner were making their way through the woods at an astonishing pace. Knowing full well that Peters

THE SUPPLY BOAT RUNNING THE FALLS. — *Page 230.*

and his men would soon be in pursuit of them, they held their course at right angles to the path through the black growth.

Presently they came to a steep embankment, that ran down into the swale thickly fringed with a black alder growth.

"There's a brook or stream beyond those bushes," panted Warner. "But we're liable to leave tracks here."

"Not if we use this windfall," said Norman, pointing to where a large fallen tree extended down the slope, and into the bushes.

"There's a good hiding-place under that old top," gasped Fred. "I reckon we'd better stow away there and rest up a spell."

The boys carefully made their way down the trunk of the old windfall, and were soon snugly hidden under its bushy top, which, hedged about by the alder bushes, made an almost ideal hiding-place.

Presently they heard the quick, labored breath of a racing man, and Gusty Peters came threshing down the side of the hill.

"Not a track," he muttered, hoarsely. He paused a moment, seated himself on the upper end of the big windfall, and wiped his perspiring face with a red bandana handkerchief of pretentious size.

There was a sound of some one moving about further up the slope a moment later, and Peters, putting his fingers in his mouth, gave two long, shrill whistles.

CHAPTER XIX

AT THE HOME OF THE HERMIT

The whistles given by Peters were immediately answered, and a moment later Black Jake Jasper came down the slope, and seated himself beside his leader.

"I'm afeared we're dished, Jake," declared the big leader, disconsolately. "I was a blame fool to take th' chances I did. Th' boys simply played hoss with them Frenchmen. Ketched 'em both unawares."

"Asleep an' snorin'," interposed Jasper.

"An' fetched 'em right up t' th' edge o' th' black growth," continued Peters, ignoring the interruption. "Then they 'lowed 'em t' walk back Spanish. Didn't ary one on 'em dare t' look behind 'em. It wasn't till they got into th' camp an' peeked through th' chinkin' thet they see th' coast was clear, an' mustered up voice enough t' yell."

"Hed 'em hypnotized all right," said Jasper.

"I don't want thet Warner t' reach this stream," continued Peters. "He's a nat'ral born woodsman. I could see he was keepin' tabs on our course comin' in, a-lookin' at th' sun, a-watchin' th' moss on th' trees, an a-notin' th' way th' streams flowed. Now th' minute he comes t' this dead water and figgers out

thet she's flowin' southeast he'll know pretty well thet she empties into Chamberlain Lake. He won't have t' foller it a great ways afore he'll come round th' Ox-bow an' hit th' bridge on Tom Bowker's tote-road. He'll know very well thet it'll lead him straight back t' Chamberlain dam. Come on," he added, "we must arrange t' guard th' stream below th' black growth an' then we can come back an' thresh out this section o' th' woods in detail."

Peters made his way up the slope at a rapid gait, followed by Black Jake. The boys, relieved at their departure, were about to leave their hiding-place when they were startled by a voice speaking to them from the other side of the alders.

"Whist, boys! Sh-h! Come through the bushes to the stream," it said, in a low tone.

"Who are you, anyway?" demanded Norman.

"A friend," replied the voice.

"What do you say, Fred?" asked Norman.

"I reckon we'd better chance it," said Fred. "It isn't possible for it to be one of Peters' gang."

Crawling through the alders, the boys stood upon the marshy shore of the stream face to face with a man in a canoe.

"Dave Umber!" they gasped in chorus.

"At your service, young friends," was the response. "Were those accursed men pursuing you?"

"Yes," replied Norman.

"Ah, I thought so," returned Umber. "It were

better for both of them that they devote their time to fleeing from the wrath to come," he added, in mournful tones.

"Even as they fled from you," declared Norman, with a sudden confirmation of the suspicion he had secretly entertained as to the identity of Gusty Peters' ghost.

The faint suggestion of a smile relaxed the solemn features of the hermit for a brief moment, and then passed away, leaving them more funereal than ever.

"'Twas well they stood not on the order of their going," he declared, in a thin, shrill voice.

"Reckon you stiffened up their back hair a little," commented Warner, but the hermit made no response, and the boys did not pursue the subject further. The old man appeared about as they had last seen him, except that his waxy features were, if anything, a trifle thinner and sharper.

He sat midway of a long, birch-bark canoe of somewhat clumsy workmanship, and his long white hair, and flowing beard, gave him the look of a patriarch.

"I judge you would flee the tents of the wicked, and hide yourselves from the eyes of thine enemies?" said Umber, in a tone of mournful inquiry.

"That's just what we're up to," responded Norman.

"It was very fortunate that I was at hand to hear thee in thy distress," said Umber, solemnly.

"How did you happen to be here anyway?" asked Norman.

"I was fishing on the still beaver water," was the response.

"The still beaver water?" repeated Warner, vaguely.

"Yes, this dead water is the result of a beaver dam three miles below here," explained the hermit.

"What do you catch here?" asked Norman.

"These," responded Umber, displaying a beautiful string of trout that weighed from half a pound to a pound apiece. "If you would escape thine enemies," he continued, "you must come with me. I can furnish thee an asylum and a resting-place. If thee tarry here surely thou shalt fall again into the hands of thine enemies."

"I think we'd better go with him, Fred," declared Norman.

They took their places in the canoe, and with a long, steady sweep of his paddle the hermit drove them up the dead-water at a rapid pace. As they advanced the stream widened into what seemed to be a shallow lake, but which Umber told them was really a submerged bog. Occasionally, he said, in the fall, following a season of drouth, it became dry enough to cross on foot. Once this had happened in an ordinary summer, when some miscreant released the water by blowing out the beaver dam.

As they went across the stretch of almost stagnant water, they came in view of a high and heavily wooded headland that stood boldly out into the bog and fell away in almost sheer descent to the water's edge.

"That looks as if it might have been a big horse-back once," said Warner.

"Some giant may have cut it off short with his big knife to give the bog a chance," responded Norman, lightly.

To all appearances the bog stretched away before this promontory, but, to the surprise of the boys, Umber turned his canoe sharply around its projecting front, and followed along the steep slope of its further side to a small, narrow stream that wound between banks so heavily grown with alders that the branches almost overlapped. Around about them was a dense black-growth that extended from the rear of the alder growth to the higher ground beyond. It was a way at once dark and foreboding. So well was the entrance to it concealed that it would have been almost certain to have escaped the attention of one not specially looking for it. The waters of the alder-shaded stream were dark and stagnant. The atmosphere that surrounded it was permeated with the moist and pungent odors of decaying vegetation. In places along the steamy shores, where the water widened into shallows, Norman and Fred could see the dark, black muck, of almost liquid consistency, that formed the bottom. For a time they followed their dark and winding way among the alder bushes between banks so close together in places as to afford barely room enough for the canoe to pass between them. Then suddenly their frail craft emerged from the alder growth into a wide expanse of

dark water, surrounded by steep banks heavily wooded with black growth down to the water's edge.

"The Devil's punch bowl!" exclaimed Norman.

"No," responded Umber. "It's his ink pot. See," he added, driving his long paddle through the shallow water, and lifting its blade above the surface, spoon-fashion, dripping with dark liquid muck.

"Three feet of water, and a thousand feet of mud," he quavered. "There's no bottom to this. It runs clear through the earth and comes out on the other side in a big tea garden in China. It is a passage way for bones," he added, solemnly.

"What bones?" asked Norman, curiously.

"All bones," responded Umber. "It's the suction of the mud," he added, vaguely. "When once it gets its hold on any living creature it never lets go. It is relentless. It pulls him down, down, like a demon. It sucks his blood, devours his flesh, and gives only his bones to China."

He paused and gave vent to an uncanny laugh, so wild, and shrill, and long drawn out, that it made the blood of his two passengers run cold, and filled them with a vague terror and uneasiness.

Almost immediately, however, the mood of Umber changed.

"Be of good cheer, young friends," he said. "These things are not for us. We know the dangers thereof and will pass them by."

"Nature has been filling this big storage basin for

centuries with the wash of decaying leaves and windfalls, while the rains that have filled it have served to keep its entire contents in a partial state of solution," remarked Norman, who had been studying the conditions about him with curious interest.

"There are springs in the mud," remarked Umber. "I've seen them boil, and boil in many places."

"They would naturally break out near the bottom of such a place as this," declared Warner, who had a woodsman's instinct in locating water supplies.

"I don't think I should like to go in swimming here," said Norman. "If the suction of that mud should once get a grip on any one I don't imagine that it would ever let go of him."

"It would pull him down, down, down, to the end of time," crooned Umber, solemnly.

He swung his canoe to the right, and the boys saw that what they had first taken to be the further side of the "punch bowl," was, in reality, a high, heavily wooded island, whose steep, heavy sides rose precipitously from the depths of black muck and water. A narrow stretch of sluggish water separated it on either side from the main slopes of the big punch bowl, while, beyond its further end, the waters widened into a mud pond of considerable extent.

Down the comparatively narrow stretch of water, that lay between the left side of the island and the almost precipitous heights of the mainland, Umber drove his canoe with long, swinging dips of his paddle.

Norman and Fred gazed in wonder at the sinewy strength of this cadaverous-looking old man, who had impressed himself upon Gusty Peters and his men as the very impersonation of death.

Presently they rounded a projecting point of the island, which sloped gently to the water's edge, and which was densely covered with cat spruces, merging near the shore into a heavy alder growth. Beyond this growth they entered a little cove.

As they did so a cry of delight came from both of the boys. The scene before them was indeed one that might well arouse their enthusiasm. The side of the island came down at this point with gentle slope to a dark, sandy beach. Back of this beach was a clearing about two acres in extent, inclosed on its three land sides with a living wall of heavy evergreen growth. Midway of this clearing with its front end facing the beach was a small cabin of peeled logs from the back end of which about four feet of stone chimney projected above the ridgepole. A short distance away in the rear of this cabin was a rougher one of unpeeled logs which the boys took to be a wood-shed. Both cabins were carefully shingled, and gave evidence of some care in construction.

In the rear of these buildings was a large half-grown garden with a specially good-sized potato patch. It was apparent that the hermit was something of a farmer, as well as a fisherman.

"You used shaved shingles on that roof," said

Warner, as he and Norman stepped ashore from the canoe, and stood looking, in fascinated wonder, upon the scene before them.

The hermit, who with one strong pull had drawn his canoe well up on the shore, turned to them with a face beaming with pride.

"Yes," he said. "I shaved them myself." He spread out his long, thin hands. "With these, and God's help," he said, reverently, "I created this clearing and these buildings."

"'Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long,'"

he quoted. "The nearer we live to the great heart of Nature," he added, "the fewer and simpler are our needs."

The conversation was interrupted at this point by a small fox terrier that came racing madly from the woods in the rear of the clearing, and leaped joyfully upon the hermit, who caressed him with many affectionate pats.

"Did old Bozy get lonesome?" he asked, solicitously.

The dog answered with a low whine.

"He says 'yes'," declared the hermit, delightedly, turning to the boys. "He is a most gifted dog," he added, gravely. "Oftentimes when the nights are dark, and God's winds sway the tree-tops, Bozy and I have sat before the fire and talked things over by the hour."

He paused and looked at the dog, who responded promptly with a sharp bark.

"You see he backs up what I say," declared the hermit, with shining eyes. "Here, Bozy, are two new friends I've brought you," he added, with a glance at Norman and Fred.

Again the hermit indulged in a child-like laugh of pleasure.

"He accepts you," he said. "Your credentials are endorsed. Welcome to Foxlair."

"You've made panel doors to your cabins," said Norman, as they strolled leisurely up the path to the hermit's home.

"Yes," responded Umber. "My father was a mason, and I worked with him more or less as a boy. I learned the carpenter's trade, and worked at it until I went to college to fit myself for the law."

"Are you a lawyer?" asked Norman.

The hermit's mood had changed, and it was evident that he only partially understood the question. He stretched up his long arms with suppliant gesture, and gazed, with a far-away look, into the hazy blue of the sky.

"I am a child of Nature," he cried, in a high, shrill voice. "I hear her voices. I follow her summons. I live in the sunshine of God's care and mercy."

The boys forebore to question him further, and presently he opened the door of the cabin and ushered them within. A large coon cat came forward, and rubbed his fluffy sides against the hermit's legs with happy purrs.

"And is old Blackstone glad to see Dave?" he inquired anxiously.

The cat responded with a loud meow.

"See that!" exclaimed the hermit, joyously. "That bears out what I tell you. I am attuned to the universal harmonies. Everything in Nature has a voice for me."

The boys did not reply, being busily engaged in making an inspection and mental inventory of the cabin. It bore the evidence of patient and careful workmanship. The log walls had been plumbed and a neat spruce dado, laid in narrow sheathing, ran around the room to a height of almost four feet.

"I worked that out from the trees," said the hermit, with evident satisfaction in his handicraft.

"It must have been a job," said Norman.

"It was," agreed Umber, "but I didn't do it all in one day. The secret of successful workmanship is patience. A little at a time, perhaps, but that little done thoroughly and well."

The interior of the roof was covered with an old canvas neatly stretched upon the camp ribs.

"An old driving tent that was given me," said Umber. "It was full of holes when I got it, but I sewed it up and made it answer."

The space between the top of the dado and the lower edges of the canvas was covered with deerskins so interlapped as to form a continuous stretch around the room.

" Shot them, and tanned the hides myself," explained the hermit, briefly.

Midway of the further end of the camp was a huge stone fireplace.

The floor was made of narrow strips of plank, worked with a broadaxe from small spruce trees, and smoothed and jointed with draw-shave and plane, at the obvious expense of no small amount of care and labor. Midway of it, near the door, was a cook-stove whose funnel suspended by hay wire from screw eyes extending through the canvas above into the camp ribs, ran into the big stone chimney about two feet below the roof peak. To the left of the doorway was a neat dish closet above a jointed sink, which found sewerage by means of a wooden pipe extending through the log wall. The space beneath the sink was sheathed in and provided with a door, which had a wooden latch and swung on wooden hinges. The little closet thus provided served as a storage place for cooking utensils. On the opposite side of the room in the corner nearest the fireplace were two bunks, one above the other, which were supplied with fresh fir boughs, and clean blankets. Four small windows, one in each wall, lighted the room. A number of odds and ends hung upon wooden hooks along the stretch of deerskin, a Winchester rifle, a pair of snow-shoes, a shotgun, and a number of garments reinforced with innumerable patches. A big chest at the foot of the bunk, evidently contained the most cherished of the hermit's possessions.

CHAPTER XX

THE REAPPEARANCE OF GUSTY PETERS

From the cabin Norman and Fred followed their strange guide to his workshop, in which he evidently felt a just pride. A long work-bench ran the entire length of it on one side. This was provided with a strong wooden vise at one end. Above the bench were arranged a number of small shelves, and a rough cabinet of drawers for the storage of tools, of which the hermit evidently had a fine assortment. He also had a considerable collection of various odds and ends of hardware. At one end of the camp opposite the work-bench was a combined iron vise and anvil. Near it was a grindstone which worked by foot-power. At the opposite end of the camp was a small forge, which found draught through a stone chimney. There was a hoe, a rake, and a spade, with which the hermit evidently tilled his garden patch, and also two axes, in addition to a big broadaxe which he had evidently used with no little skill in the construction of his camp.

An hour after arriving at the hermit's home the boys sat down with him to a hearty dinner of fried trout and baked potatoes. The afternoon was spent in a leisurely exploration of the little island, with faithful

Bozy following delightedly at their heels. Both he and Blackstone had unqualifiedly approved of Norman and Fred, and were already on the best of terms with them.

They had corned deer meat and potatoes for supper that evening, and retired at an early hour to the upper bunk, which had been assigned them by the hermit, glad of an opportunity to secure a good night's rest after the changes and excitements of the day.

They awoke the following morning to find themselves the sole occupants of the cabin. The hermit was gone. Neither Norman nor Fred attached any special importance to this fact. Obviously he was a restless character, and was probably up at sunrise to hoe in his garden. As they stepped from the cabin into the hazy light of the morning, Bozy, who was waiting outside, leaped upon them with the most joyous and friendly greeting. Blackstone also put in an appearance proudly exhibiting a field mouse, which he carried in his mouth, as a specimen of his prowess.

"I reckon Umber has left the island," declared Norman. "If he were here Bozy wouldn't be very far from his heels."

"No doubt of that," agreed Fred. "Besides, his canoe is gone."

"So it is," said Norman, glancing at the beach. "Perhaps he's after another mess of trout for breakfast."

"Perhaps," repeated Warner, doubtfully, "and then

again he may be on his way to Gusty Peters to drive a sharp bargain for us."

"I don't believe anything of the kind," declared Norman, with conviction. "This man has trusted you and me implicitly. He has taken us to the heart of the still beaver waters, and left us in full charge of his home and his possessions. He has shown all confidence in us, and we must have some faith in him."

"How can we?" asked Fred. "Don't you see that he's as crazy as a loon?"

"No," replied Norman, with decision. "I don't see anything of the kind. A man as crazy as that would never show the mechanical skill, or the sense of cleanliness and order that are exhibited here. Umber is doubtless, to some extent, mentally unbalanced, and his imagination plays him some tricks in the way of delusions; but there is method in all he does, and much of his conversation is as natural as yours and mine. I believe, Fred, that this old man is a true friend, and that he will be loyal to us whatever may happen."

"I hope you're right, Norman," responded Fred. "I'm willing to acknowledge that I'd a good deal rather take my chances with him than with Gusty Peters and his gang."

"He's an educated man," declared Norman, "and I am sure that he is a good one. If he has ever done wrong it has been the result of some mental vagary, rather than any defect of character."

"I reckon that's so," assented Warner, "but just

think of the temptation he's under at times. He hasn't very much to eat at this minute, and there may be times when he actually goes hungry."

"He should certainly be able to raise what potatoes he needs the year round," declared Norman.

"That's so," assented Fred, "but potatoes without salt pork are only half a diet."

"That's probably what brought him to our wangan that night," said Norman, "but that was a good way from home."

"A jaunt like that means very little to a man like him, especially when he can make the greater part of it in a canoe," returned Fred. "He probably knows this whole section as well as you or I know our alphabet."

"Well, let's see what we can dig out for breakfast," said Norman.

"Our best outlook will be the potato hole," declared Warner.

Together the boys made their way to the upper end of the garden where a wooden door led into an excavation in the side of the hill. A framework of logs formed its front, the whole being deeply banked at top and sides with the earth removed from the excavation.

"Looks like a tomb," commented Norman, as they stood by its entrance.

"I reckon we'll find it a very practical sort of a cellar," declared Warner, as he pulled open the rough plank door.

Stepping within, the boys found themselves in a dark cavern extending about sixteen feet into the hillside. In the far end, by the light that struggled through the doorway, they found a few bushels of potatoes in a heap upon the earth floor. There were also two pork barrels, one of which was empty, and the other about half filled with corned venison. Beyond these articles, the potato hole was empty.

"Mr. Umber is certainly up against a scanty commissary department," declared Norman.

"I feel as if it would almost be an imposition for us to levy on it," returned Fred.

"There's one satisfaction," said Norman. "If we ever get out of this scrape I'll see to it that the old man isn't as hard up again for some time to come. As it is, we'll have to take a few of his potatoes. I can't say that I'm hankerin' for any of his salt junk."

Selecting a few potatoes they left the hillside cellar, and stood for a moment inspecting the hermit's garden, which was already giving signs of a thrifty growth. There was a good-sized patch of potatoes, a big stretch of turnips, and bush beans of the "wild-goose" variety. There were also onion, beet and carrot beds, and a good-sized plot of peas. In the immediate rear of the cabin was a small piece of land which had been planted to old-fashioned flowers — marigolds, lavender, poppies, bachelor's buttons, sweet William and hollyhocks, showing that the hermit was not lacking a vein of sentiment in his farming pursuits.

Passing into the cabin the boys soon had a good fire burning in the cook-stove.

"We are like a couple of Robinson Crusoes," laughed Norman, as he put the potatoes in the oven to bake.

"Not quite so far from the mainland," replied Warner.

"No, but still I don't believe you'd care to swim there," said Norman.

"It would be easy if it were not for the muck," responded Fred.

"These potatoes seem to be about the whole bill of fare," said Norman, who had been rummaging in the closets of the cabin. "This little bag of salt is the whole outfit."

"Isn't there any tea, coffee, or sugar?" asked Warner.

"Not a thing," replied Norman. "I guess Mr. Umber is content to get all his liquid supplies from the spring at the foot of the garden."

"Good air and good water are fine appetizers; but they won't set the table," declared Fred.

"I saw some worm holes in the black soil under the sink spout," said Norman. "How do you suppose the worms crossed the channel?"

"In Umber's pocket," replied Warner, confidently. "If there really are worms there you may be sure he brought them to the island and planted them here. I'll soon find out."

He hastened to the workshop, and secured a spade.

"Hurrah! Here's half a dozen good ones," he cried, exultantly, as he turned the first shovel full of earth.

"All you'll need this morning," declared Norman. "I think I'd better stay and watch the fire. We mustn't take any chances with those potatoes."

Twenty minutes later Warner was back with two good-sized pickerel. "These were all that bit," he said, "although I saw a hornpout scuttle away into the mud."

"These are all right," declared Norman. "We'll make out a breakfast fit for a king."

"I imagine most of them would be glad to sit down to one with so good an appetite as either one of us will bring to this," declared Warner.

"I wish you'd go up to the potato hole and see if there is a piece of pork in that barrel of corned venison," said Norman.

Warner hurried away while Norman went to the spring to fill the wooden water pail. As he placed it on the shelf beside the sink, Fred returned to the cabin with several thin slices of salt pork on the tin plate he had taken with him.

"Do you know," he declared, "I think the small junk I cut this from was part of the piece we gave Umber when we turned him loose from our camp on the Sebois."

"It is a return of the bread we threw upon the waters," responded Norman. "I suppose a barrel of pork would mean more to the poor old fellow than a

gold mine or a barrel of bank stocks would to most people."

"He must earn some money," declared Warner.

"What makes you think so?"

"Why, didn't you see that pile of traps under his work-bench?"

"I didn't notice them," confessed Norman.

"Well, there are a lot of them of all shapes and sizes. I imagine that the old man traps pretty steadily through the fall and winter. Of course, there's always spruce gum to be had in this section."

"He must have had some source of income," admitted Norman, "but it's very evident that he is in mighty hard sledding just at present."

In a short time the fish and potatoes were cooked, and the boys sat down to a hearty breakfast. Later they worked for a time weeding the garden. As the day advanced the sun beat down upon the little island with a relentless heat, while the atmosphere became close and oppressive. Many dragon flies, of gorgeous color, skimmed the still waters about the island, and the silence of the drowsy shore was broken by the drone and hum of myriad insects.

At length, even the cabin itself, already warm from the heat of the cook-stove, became intolerable, and, taking Norman's double-barreled shotgun, the boys, accompanied by faithful Bozy, retired to the cooler shelter of the woods.

"It looks to me as if a storm were brewing,"

declared Fred, as they sat upon a mossy knoll, and wiped the perspiration from their faces.

"But there's scarcely a cloud in the sky," objected Norman.

"No," admitted Fred; "but it isn't the clouds that are the best prophets in this country at this season of the year. It's the condition of the atmosphere."

"Sh-h! There's a partridge," whispered Norman, warningly.

Fred, following his gaze, saw a beautiful birch partridge strutting along the top of a windfall.

A shot from the gun brought it promptly to the ground.

"Hurrah!" said Norman, gleefully, as he proudly exhibited his prize to Warner. "Here's our dinner, Fred."

"I hope we sha'n't have to share it with Gusty Peters," replied Warner, soberly.

A shadow of apprehension clouded Norman's face.

"I didn't think of that," he admitted, regretfully. "You don't imagine Gusty's gang heard that, do you?"

"I'm not sure," replied Warner, doubtfully. "The report of a gun carries a good way on a still day like this."

"It wouldn't locate us anyway," said Norman.

"Not definitely," assented Fred; "but it would give any one who heard it a general idea of our direction."

That noon they feasted upon broiled partridge and

mashed potato, dividing the remnants of their repast between Bozy and Blackstone.

"It's mighty strange what's become of Umber," said Warner, as they cleared away the tin dinner dishes. "I can't help thinking that he may be trying to drive a sharp bargain with Peters. Just think what the surplus supplies of that camp would mean to him just now."

"I can't think that," returned Norman, resolutely. "Whatever the weaknesses of Umber may be, I don't believe that treachery is one of them. He brought us here and left us in complete possession of his little world, because he trusted us. The least we can do is to return the compliment."

"Perhaps you're right, Norman," replied Warner, in a doubtful tone. "I only wish I could feel as sure of him as you do. I've almost felt to-day as if the right thing for us to do would be to build a raft and clear out of here."

"I believe we're safer right where we are," declared Norman, firmly. "We at least have a comfortable shelter, and can find enough to eat, even if the range of diet is a trifle limited. We are certainly in no danger of starving."

"Well, I'm with you whatever you decide to do," declared Warner, in a tone of resignation. "Let's get into the woods and cool off. This room is like an oven."

"If I were in Umber's place I should get a Dutch

oven and plan to do my summer cooking out of doors," declared Norman. "Do you suppose that Umber has ever been a river driver?" he asked, noticing a pickpole suspended on some pegs beneath the cabin eaves.

"No," said Fred, with a critical glance at this implement of the drive. "That's one he made himself. They don't usually take so much pains with them. He found the ring and pick somewhere — probably in a broken piece that the drivers had thrown away — and fitted a new pole to them."

"He may have used it in floating some of his timber across the punch bowl," suggested Norman.

"I imagine that's just what he made it for," acquiesced Fred.

"My shotgun isn't much good now," declared Norman, a little ruefully, as they started for the woods with Bozy joyfully leading the way. "I've only one cartridge left."

"Never mind," declared Fred. "I've got my Colt's revolver. So we shall be all right, even if we should meet a bear."

A little later in the afternoon, as they were returning to the cabin, Bozy broke into excited barks, and almost immediately they heard the quick, sharp sound of chopping axes.

With pale faces they hurried to the clearing, and looked across the channel to the steep main shore, where, halfway up the sharp slope, Gusty Peters and Black Jake Jasper were busily engaged in felling a tall

spruce, whose top, with wood still showing fairly white, had evidently been carried away by some recent gale.

"They're making a bridge!" exclaimed Norman.

"That's just what they're doing," returned Warner. "We've been sold out."

"If that man attempts to lay a hand on me, I'll give him the full benefit of the cartridge in this gun," declared Norman, firmly, "and it's loaded with buck-shot."

"I reckon I'll take along the Winchester," declared Warner; "and the pickpole," he added, with a burst of inspiration. "They shall never land that log on this shore."

They made their way to the cabin, and securing the rifle and pickpole, went at once to the little beach, Bozy preceding them with furious barks. As they reached the shore the mighty spruce fell with a roar, its upper end resting lightly in the mud and water a few feet beyond the island shore.

"Just a pattern!" exclaimed Black Jake, exultantly.

For the first time Peters recognized the boys.

"Hello!" he said, turning towards them, with a triumphant grin. "Th' escaped prisoners hev settled down t' farmin', hev they?"

CHAPTER XXI

THE ENEMY DISCOMFITED

The cool effrontery of Peters, and his complacent assumption that he had them in his power, was very irritating to Norman and Fred. It was evident that the big Allegash boss thought that the boys still believed him to be a game warden, and would offer him no more resistance, even though they were armed, than they did when he first pretended to arrest them. This delusion, however, was speedily dispelled.

"There are no escaped prisoners here," said Warner, coldly.

"It will be as well for us to drop all theatricals and horse play right here and now," supplemented Norman. "We don't intend to be imposed upon any longer."

Gusty Peters' face grew red with rage at this bold declaration.

"'Bow! wow! wow!' said th' little yeller dog," he sneered, contemptuously. "What d'ye say, Jake?"

"Mighty long tail our cat's got," responded Jasper, derisively.

"I want you to understand one thing, Peters," declared Norman, hotly. "You'll interfere with us here at your peril. The man who made this shotgun

put me on an equality with you. I don't intend to submit to any further interference, and I give you fair warning."

"Sho now!" responded Peters, with provoking coolness. "What would ye do t' me?"

"Do to you?" repeated Norman, warmly. "If you undertake to lay a hand upon me, I'll fill you full of buckshot."

"Ho! ho! ho!" roared Peters, disdainfully. "So ye'd rally shoot me, would ye? Cool off thar, sonny! Cool off! Don't let yer temper gallop away with yer brains, if ye've got any."

"You make as light of this as you want to," returned Norman, firmly. "You may express your scorn in whatever cheap wit you choose to; but you can't scare us. If you attempt to interfere with us some one will get badly hurt."

Black Jake Jasper leaned forward and spoke a few words to Peters, but the burly giant waved him away with an impatient gesture.

"Git out with ye!" he bellowed, wrathfully. "Do ye s'pose I was brought up in th' woods to be skeered by an owl? Do ye think fer a jiffy thet I'm a man t' be run through the chutes by a couple o' kids? G'lang with ye? I reckon I can take keer o' myself in spite of these 'ere great dangers."

He paused and broke into a low, harsh laugh, full of contemptuous resentment.

"So, ye'd go so fur es t' shoot me, would ye, bub?"

he said, with a glance at Norman that was intended to be full of withering scorn.

"I intend to use every means in my power to prevent you from interfering with me again," asserted Norman, resolutely. "We are not hunting for trouble; but you seem to be, and what's more you're in a fair way of finding it."

"Git out!" snorted Peters, incredulously. "What ye talkin' erbout? Thar wouldn't ary one o' you boys shoot nobody."

"Not if they let us alone; but we don't intend to be molested by you or any one else," said Norman.

"That's so," added Warner.

"Fiddlesticks!" grunted Peters, scoffingly. "You boys ain't fools enough t' shoot at a man who never did ye any harm, an' who doesn't intend to. Now I've no idee o' bein' hard on ye; but I'm too old a man, an' hev ben through too many hard scrapes in my life, to be afeared of a couple o' boys or to be bluffed by 'em. Understan' thet! Stiddy th' end of this bridge, Jake," he added, as he stepped upon the log which had been felled across the channel.

"Hold on there!" exclaimed Norman, with determination. "You stay on your own side. Don't you attempt to come over here."

"Do ye own thet 'ere island?" inquired Peters.

"No," responded Norman, "and neither do you; but we have possession, and that's nine points of the law."

"Law! Snakes!" roared Peters, red with anger. "There's no law es gives a couple o' calves th' right t' say where I shall go or where I sha'n't in these 'ere woods. Stiddy thar, Jake. If I'm goin' t' be shot for goin' where I please, it might jest es well be now es later."

He made a quick dash to cross the log, but had gone only a few steps when Warner, who had put aside his rifle, drove the sharp point of the pickpole which he was holding into the end of the log nearest the island.

"Hol' on thar!" roared Peters, in alarm. "Git out! Don't ye dare tetch this log. I'll — I'll skin ye if ye do."

But the frantic threats of the burly Allegash leader were in vain. With a sharp push Warner swung the end of the log away from the island shore and lengthwise of the channel, in spite of Jasper's frantic efforts to hold it at the opposite end. Peters balanced himself uncertainly for a moment on its top, and then, with a startled yell of dismay, fell, with a prodigious splash, into the water and muck of the channel.

So astounded was Black Jake at the unexpected turn of events that he stood knee deep in the mud, where he had waded in his attempt to hold his end of the log with his hands, and stared after his disappearing chief in open-mouthed amazement.

As he fell Peters instinctively grasped the log with both arms, but it rolled, under the one-sided distribution of his weight. With a gasp of horror Jasper turned

and raced up the bank. Seizing the axe, he cut down, with a single swing, a tall, slender spruce that grew near the shore. He turned with it in his hands towards the dead-water where Peters, having got his head above the surface again, was sputtering furiously in his frantic efforts to clear his mouth and eyes of the roily water. His long hair was plastered closely about his ears, and a stream of black muck, running down the sides of his head, spattered upon his broad shoulders.

"Blor-h! — er — er —h-hurry!" he coughed, as he wildly pounded the water with his big hands. "I — I — can't move. I'm — I'm — ketched in th' mud!"

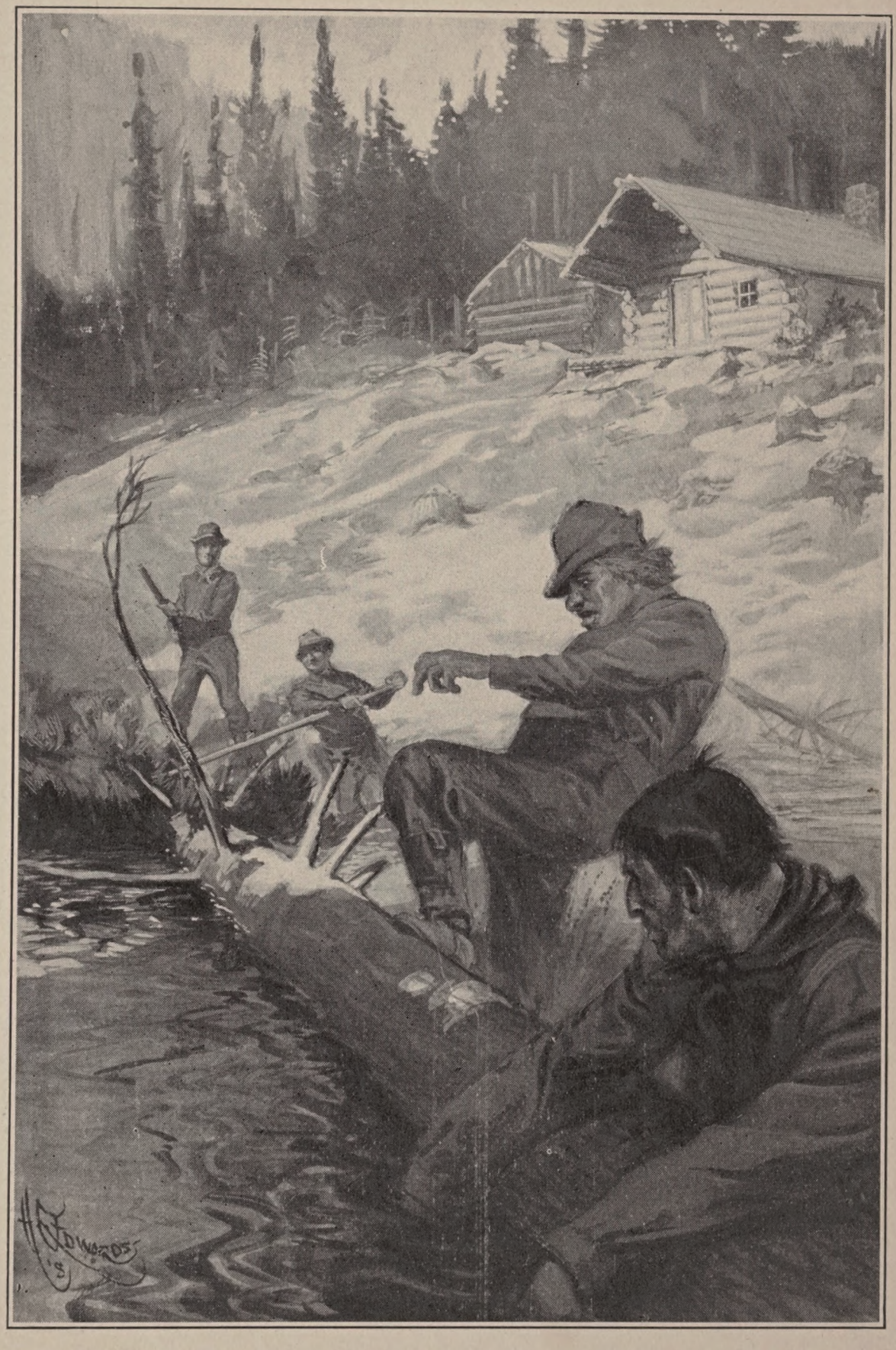
"Here, git a-holt o' this!" returned Jasper, shoving him the bushy end of the long spruce sapling. "Look out or ye'll break it!" he added, warningly, as Peters grasped the proffered support with both hands, in a despairing grip.

"Pull, quick!" he gasped.

"Easy! Easy thar!" admonished Jasper. "This 'ere pole will hold 'most es much es a chain if we bring all th' pressure endwise; but she'll snap like a pipe-stem if ye go t' bearin' down."

"Pull, blast ye!" roared Peters. "I know all erbout thet."

Black Jake carefully exerted his great strength and drew Peters from the muck. He pulled him slowly but surely to the shore, upon which he crawled a moment later, a most bedraggled and sorry-looking object. He was covered from head to foot with the slimy black mud



PETERS FELL WITH A PRODIGIOUS SPLASH. — *Page 259.*

of the dead-water. His huge coarse features resembled those of a negro, and it was evident that his harrowing experience had not improved his temper. As soon as he could command his voice he broke forth into a perfect torrent of wild oaths and savage denunciation.

"If it's gun play ye want, ye young rascallions, I'll see thet ye git it in mighty quick time," he roared. "Put thet log back t' once!" he added, furiously, noting for the first time that the boys had taken advantage of his ducking to pull the log to the shore of the island, along which its length now extended well beyond reach from the opposite shore.

Neither Norman nor Fred made any response to this imperious command.

"Did ye hear me?" roared Peters, in thunderous tones.

"You had better save your breath to cool your porridge. We both have ears," returned Norman, coolly.

"Wal, ye won't hev much longer, if ye don't do es I tell ye," stormed Peters. "I say put back thet log an' be mighty quick erbout it."

He paused a moment as if expecting to see Norman and Fred immediately comply with his request, but neither of them made any move to do so.

"Do ye mean to tell me ye won't do it?" he demanded, in a tone of incredulity.

"You've guessed right," responded Fred.

"You'd better go back to your camp and change your clothes," advised Norman.

"And take a bath," added Warner.

The burly Allegash boss danced up and down in a perfect tumult of passion.

"I'll make the both on ye rue this minute or I'm a liar," he howled. "Perhaps ye think it's very smart for two youngsters like you t' be a-floutin' o' Gusty Peters," he fumed. "Ye've got too big for yer trousers — both on ye. Any one could dead easy become a millionaire by buyin' you boys for what yer wuth, an' sellin' of ye for what ye think yer wuth," he added, with what he evidently regarded as a scorching burst of sarcasm.

This violent explosion provoked no reply from Norman and Fred, and again Peters gave way to a boisterous paroxysm of rage and chagrin.

"I'll gin ye two boys a little th' worst larrupin' ye ever got in yer lives, when I lay hands on ye agin," he blustered, fiercely.

"Look here, Peters," said Norman, sharply. "It won't do the slightest good for you to waste any threats on us. You can rave, and fume, and sweat and swear as much as you want to, but it won't change the situation. We are not afraid of you. We do not intend to submit to you as long as our cartridges hold out, and we have a fairly good supply. You are a criminal with a long term in the State prison staring you in the face."

"Yes," interposed Warner, "and I reckon you'll get it quite a spell before we get that licking."

Peters glared at them a moment in speechless rage.

"This beats all!" he gasped, when he finally found his voice. "I came t' ye peaceable. I didn't want no trouble; but I see ye insist on hevin' it, an', by Jings, ye can. If it's gun play ye're after, ye can hev all ye want of it in mighty short order. Jake," he added, "ye stay here an' watch matters a spell while I go back t' the camp and clean up a bit. If these 'ere boys want a shootin' match, I reckon we'll be able t' gin 'em one a little later."

He scrambled up the bank, and disappeared from sight in the deep woods, leaving Black Jake on guard.

"I'm a tellin' you boys es how ye've made a mighty bad mistake in gittin' wrong with Gusty," growled Jasper, resentfully, when his chief was gone. "He's a fighter from way back, an' ye'd ben a good deal better off if ye minded what he said t' ye. It won't go easy with ye when he gits his hands on ye."

"And it won't be easy for him to get hold of us," declared Norman, vigorously. "Fred," he added, turning to Warner, "hadn't you better go over to the other side of the island and cut across to the mainland in the canoe, while I'm entertaining our genial friend here?"

"A good idea," returned Warner, promptly.

"I'd steer clear of the stream," added Norman. "Peters has his two Frenchman watching that. You can cut through the woods. Ten to one if you don't run on to some of the boys hunting for us, before you get to the dam."

"Sure enough," responded Fred, "but what shall I

do if Jake here swings around on the main shore, and heads me off?"

"It will bother him some to do it;" returned Norman, cheerfully, "but if he does, I'll slip across here on the log while he's away after you, and go myself."

Black Jake was evidently perplexed and dumfounded at the boldness of this plan of campaign, which he perceived to be an entirely practical one. Any one on the main shore would be at a disadvantage in watching a single person, inasmuch as the circumference around the outer circle of the "punch bowl" was vastly greater than the circumference of the island, and involved moreover the crossing of a considerable stretch of deadwater. It was evident that it would be impossible for him to watch both boys successfully, and it began to dawn upon him that he might experience considerable difficulty in keeping sight of even one of them.

The sweat trickled down his forehead, and his swarthy countenance plainly showed the consternation he felt.

"Don't go for t' do thet!" he shouted, in alarm. "They ain't no call for ye t' do it."

"I think there is," returned Norman, with conviction. "Good-by, Fred. Tell the boys to bring their rifles and plenty of binding rope."

"I'll see to that. Good-by," responded Warner, as he started briskly through the garden towards the opposite side of the island.

Black Jake was clearly nonplussed. He picked up

the axe and started to climb to the top of the bank where it would be possible to make faster progress. Halfway up the steep slope he paused in dismay. Norman had dropped his gun and taken up the pick-pole. It would be very easy for him to swing the log across the dead-water and make his escape. Jasper was obviously in a panic of excitement and indecision. Presently he came slowly back and seated himself upon a big rock a little way up from the shore, in very evident perturbation of spirit. His dark eyes were contracted in a scowl of perplexity, and he was muttering what appeared to be the fiercest kind of maledictions upon the departed Peters.

"Not much of a general, is he?" asked Norman.

"Hesn't th' brains of a louse," asserted Black Jake, with an oath.

"You've got a chance to clear out now," said Norman, "but if you stay with Gusty Peters, it will not take much of a prophet to tell your finish. You'll go to the State prison at Thomaston, and work out your board in the blacksmith shop."

Norman was surprised at the effect of this statement upon the fierce temper of Black Jake, already irritated almost to the exploding point by the uncomfortable dilemma in which Peters had left him. With a muffled cry of rage he leaped to his feet as if he had received an electric shock, and seizing the handle of the axe which lay near him, with both hands, he hurled it across the dead-water at Norman with all his strength.

Fortunately it flew far wide of its mark. Jasper was about to follow it up with some stones, but the fact that Norman had picked up his shotgun, and was covering him with it caused him to drop them and sullenly resume his seat.

"I'll give you Peters's advice," said Norman, heatedly. "Cool off. If you don't do it something will drop here right off."

Jasper made no response. He pulled his black corncob pipe from his pocket, filled it with trembling hand, lighted it carefully, and smoked in moody silence, his quick, voluminous puffs giving evidence of his excited frame of mind.

"There's no need of your getting mad, and making a fool of yourself," pursued Norman.

"Shet up!" responded Black Jake, in a surly tone. "I won't make any talk with ye."

"All right," responded Norman, cheerfully. "Perhaps you'd better sit right there, and smoke until Warner gets back with the boys from Chamberlain dam."

"They can't get here for two or three hours at the soonest," declared Jake. "Gusty will be here agin long afore thet."

"Perhaps he will," responded Norman, carelessly, although his heart beat fast as he saw a familiar form swing silently over the top of the steep bank, and work cautiously down towards the shore, dodging from tree to tree.

A moment later the newcomer leaped upon Jasper, and pulled him upon his back. Although taken by surprise, Black Jake put up a terrific struggle, and the two powerful men rolled to the very edge of the water. Here the struggle was soon ended. A second man came tumbling down the bank to assist the first one, and, in a very short time, the lieutenant of Gusty Peters, thoroughly subdued and bound, lay gasping upon the shore.

CHAPTER XXII

A NIGHT ENCOUNTER

When Norman and Fred failed to return to Chamberlain dam the first night after they had left it on their scouting expedition, the men of the crew, aside from Eustace, who was plainly uneasy about it, did not attach much importance to the fact. They very generally expressed the opinion that the boys had covered rather more territory than they had planned on, and, having thrown up a lean-to somewhere, were camping for the night, rather than to travel the big woods after dark.

"Wouldn't worry about 'em a minute, Mr. Eustace," said Boggs, reassuringly. "Ye see they ain't ary one on 'em ever cruised this section afore, an' it isn't surprisin' thet they should want daylight for it. They'll come a-driftin' in here to-morrow mornin', sure's yer born."

"I hope you're right, Tom," returned Eustace, "but I can't help worrying a little. What do you think, Sol?" he added, turning to the Indian, who was smoking his pipe on the deacon seat in stolid silence.

"Smart boys. Take care umselves," grunted Sol, with decision.

"Sure, an' it's not mesilf thot will be lookin' for thim before to-morrow noight," added Barney O'Connor. "It's not thim thot wud waste good dayloight to come back to the camp before supper toime."

"Right ye air, Barney," agreed Boggs. "Th' boys started out t' do a clean job o' prospectin' an' I reckon they won't show up here agin till they've swung clean round the circle."

This view of the situation prevailed among the men of the camp, who soon after retired for the night, feeling that there was nothing to worry about so far as Norman and Fred were concerned.

In the morning the work on the dam, now well under way, was resumed again. The damage wrought by the would-be dynamiters had proved to be far less serious than it was at first supposed to be, and Eustace declared that, when he was through with it, the structure would be considerably stronger than it ever was before.

As the afternoon wore away and the boys failed to put in an appearance, it was evident that the men of the crew were growing more and more uneasy about them, although they had endeavored to keep their fears from Eustace, who was plainly nervous and apprehensive.

"What do you think, Sol?" he asked, when four o'clock came with no sign of the missing boys.

"Time for look," responded the Indian. "Mebbe boy he lost."

"Just what I'm afraid of," admitted Eustace.

"Me go?" questioned Sol.

"Yes, I reckon you'd better," declared Eustace. "There isn't much daylight left, and we might as well make the most of it."

The tall Indian dropped his axe with alacrity, and a moment later was lost to sight down the tote-road over which the boys had taken their departure from the camp the previous morning.

"Had any av th' rist av us betther go?" asked Barney O'Connor, when Sol had disappeared.

It was evident that the light-hearted Irishman was not a little disturbed by the continued absence of Norman and Fred.

"No," responded Eustace, slowly. "Sol will cover more ground alone than he could if any one were with him, and there won't be time enough for the rest of us to do much before dark. I think we'll have our work here in such shape before supper, that three or four of us can take a hand in the hunt to-morrow morning, if it becomes necessary."

"I reckon Sol will round 'em up all right," declared Boggs, confidently.

"If he can't, it's pretty certain that none of the rest of us can," replied Eustace.

"Reg'lar cyclone for gittin' through th' woods," agreed Boggs.

The members of the crew had finished their supper, and were smoking their pipes in the twilight, when Sol made his reappearance, coming so silently out of

the woods that none of the men saw him until he was fairly in their midst.

"What luck?" "Did ye git trace on 'em?" "Bedad, is it lost they are?" were some of the questions that came in impatient chorus from the men of the crew.

The Indian was silent.

"I reckon you'd have a better chance to learn something if you came at him one at a time," said Eustace, dryly.

"What did you find, Sol?" he added, with very evident anxiety.

"This," said the Indian, exhibiting a lynx skin which he carried in his hand.

"A lucivee pelt, isn't it?" asked Eustace, peering at it in the semi-darkness.

"Yes," responded Sol. "Boy shoot-um; hide-um in stump; catch trout; cook-um."

"So you found where they had their dinner, did you?" questioned Eustace, in quick comprehension of the Indian's story.

"Yes," replied Sol. "Buildum fire side brook. Two others come; big fellows. All go away together."

"The Allegash fellows have got them!" exclaimed Eustace, with conviction. "How do you know they were large fellows who joined them at the brook-side?" he demanded, turning to Sol.

"Big foot," responded the Indian, briefly.

"You saw their tracks, did you?"

"Ya-as. Plenty track on bank."

"The whole thing's just as clear as the nose on your face," declared Eustace to Tom Boggs. "The boys were eating their dinners, when along came two of the Allegash gang who have been watching the dam, and gathered them in."

"It might be a good deal wuss," returned Boggs, consolingly. "It's nowise likely they'll harm ary one on 'em."

"No," admitted Eustace. "I've no idea they'd dare carry things as far as that. Still I sha'n't feel easy till we get the boys back, and we shall not fail to give this whole country a most thorough search to-morrow."

"Bedad, if ye found the trail why didn't ye kape on wid it?" demanded Barney O'Connor of Sol, breaking in upon the conversation.

"Too much dark," explained the Indian, briefly.

"I reckon it's a good deal easier t' talk about following up a blind trail et this time o' day then t' do it," declared Boggs.

"It certainly is," agreed Eustace; "but we sha'n't lose any time in getting after it, and following it up as well as we can, the very first thing in the morning."

"And where did ye say ye found the skin?" demanded O'Connor.

"Boy hidum in old stump," explained Sol.

"They was probably callatin' t' pick it up agin on their way back," explained Boggs. "Reckon we'll have it all cured for 'em by th' time they git home."

"Sure thing!" declared several of the men in chorus.

Eustace would have excused Sol Soc from doing guard duty that night, in view of his jaunt through the woods; but the Indian would not hear of it. He declared that his trip was "not'ing 't all," and insisted on taking his turn at the watch. A little later he was guarding one end of the dam, while Tom Boggs was guarding the other. Both were armed with Winchester rifles, and in a mood to give any marauders of the Allegash, who might come their way, the warmest kind of a reception.

It was a dark night and no sound broke the silence of the enveloping forest, save the occasional hoot of an owl, and the groaning of the tree-tops, swaying before the brisk breeze that blew from the cool surface of the lake.

Suddenly the men of the crew were awakened from their deep sleep, by a sharp challenge.

"Halt! Who comeum dere?"

"Git aout! What ye tryin' t' do?" chimed in another voice.

There was a moment's silence. Then came the sharp report of a rifle, followed by a shriek of pain.

The men of the crew, wide awake now, came hurrying to the dam, armed with axes, peavies, and the few guns they had been able to lay hands on in the darkness.

As they did so a flash of light came from the further end of the dam, and a second rifle report broke the silence of the night.

The effect was magical. Smothered oaths and startled exclamations came from the woods beyond the dam, followed by a crashing in the underbrush, which indicated that the intruders, whoever they might be, were taking their departure with all possible haste.

"Me hit one," declared Sol Soc, with conviction. "Me hearum yell."

"I reckon I didn't come fur from one on 'em myself," declared Tom Boggs.

"Hold on, boys!" shouted Eustace, to some of the men who were hurrying around the end of the dam. "It's too dark to chase 'em up. Let 'em go."

Somewhat reluctantly the men returned and gathered in an excited group about Eustace and Sol Soc. Here they were joined a few moments later by Boggs.

"What did you hear, Sol?" demanded Eustace.

"Me hearum coming through woods. Me yell. He no answer. Me shoot," explained the Indian.

"I reckon es how he hit one on 'em," declared Boggs. "I heard 'im squeal like a stuck pig."

"There's no doubt those fellows meant mischief," declared Eustace. "They were desperate, and were determined to make one more effort to complete their work before they gave up. I think they realize now the folly and uselessness of any further attempt to destroy this dam."

"Shure we've got th' spalpeens on th' run," asserted Barney O'Connor, jubilantly. "It's not thim thot'll be afther throubling us ony more."

"I think you're right, Barney," assented Eustace. "Still it won't be wise to take any chances. We'll keep up our watch until we feel sure of it. What's that?" he added, as a smothered groan came from the woods below the dam.

The members of the party stopped talking, and listened intently. Again an unmistakable groan came from below the dam.

"I reckon thet must be th' feller Sol hit," declared Boggs. He was about to add some further observation; but the rush of the crew around the dam left him without an audience.

Presently the men returned bearing an apparently badly wounded man whose hollow groans indicated that he was suffering great physical pain.

"Oh, I ban killed. I ban dead man for sure. I ban wan beeg, beeg fool," he moaned. "Oh, mon Dieu, how I was ban punish!"

His helpless condition appealed to the rough chivalry of the men, who bore him with all tenderness to the camp, and laid him upon a blanket in one of the bunks.

"Do any of you know him?" asked Eustace, as several lanterns were held up to show the face of the sufferer.

"No," "No," "Never saw him afore," came the chorus of response. It was very evident that the man was a stranger to the members of the crew.

"What's your name?" demanded Eustace.

"Louis Barbotte. Oh, mon Dieu! mon Dieu! I ban

faint, I ban die!" gasped the sufferer, in an agony of apprehension.

"Whose crew are you in?" continued Eustace.

"Gus — er, w'at I say — I don' tell." The wounded man ceased speaking, and lay groaning feebly.

"You needn't say any more," declared Eustace, firmly. "You are one of Gusty Peters's men. You came here to help blow up the dam. You deserve all you got."

"I ban dead man for sure," moaned the prisoner, weakly.

"You certainly have an extra good pair of lungs, for a corpse," said Eustace, grimly.

"Shootum in leg," said Sol Soc, who had been examining the wounded man.

"Rip up his trousers leg, and let's have a look at it," said Eustace.

"Through the fleshy part of the leg — painful, but not serious," he added a moment later, after a critical examination of the wound.

"Ye fired at a man, Sol, an' hit a calf," announced Tom Boggs, solemnly.

"Bedad, ye put a bullet clane through it," added Barney O'Connor. "Shure 'tis a moighty foine shot ye are."

"You t'ink I ban die?" asked the sufferer, anxiously.

"Certainly not," declared Eustace. "Your wound will be sore for a while, but it isn't dangerous. You'll be as good as new in two or three weeks. Got any hot

water?" he asked, turning to the cook, who was standing near.

"There was some left in the big kettle. I reckon it hasn't got cold yet."

"Bring me a basin full," ordered Eustace. "Look in my bag, Barney, and get that roll of iodoform gauze."

The men hastened to carry out these instructions.

"Isn't half as bad as it looked," announced Eustace when he had washed away the blood. With considerable skill he bandaged the wound, and stood for a moment inspecting the results of his work.

"There," he announced, "that's about the best I can do for you. I sha'n't expect to see you do any sprinting for quite a spell yet; but in the meantime you'll have a chance to associate with white men, and that will be considerable of a privilege for one of Gusty Peters's gang."

"I don' work for heem som' more," declared the patient, with emphasis.

"That's a good resolution. I hope you'll keep it," said Eustace.

"Begorra, it's not any wan thot will be a-workin' for him much longer, Oi'm afther thinkin'," declared Barney O'Connor. "It's himsilf as will soon be workin' for th' State, bad cess to 'im."

"I reckon he'll be pantin' for more room, afore long," added Tom Boggs.

There was little sleep for the men of the crew during

the remainder of the night. Breakfast was served at the usual early hour, and daybreak found most of them, in charge of Tom Boggs, busily at work again on the task of repairing the dam. Eustace, accompanied by Sol Soc and Barney O'Connor, made an early start for the brook, where Sol had found his traces of the boys the previous afternoon. Once there, the members of the party were almost disposed to question the correctness of the Indian's deductions, for the camp-fire was about the only thing they could find to indicate that any one had visited the little glen before them, and camp-fires were by no means uncommon in that section. It was only after Sol had patiently pointed out certain tracks that had escaped their observation that they acknowledged his superior wood-craft and followed after him, with a growing sense of their helplessness in the task before them. It was very evident that their own wood-craft would bear small comparison to that of the Indian.

Sol led the way out of the glen and along the tote-road with a promptness and an assurance that was decidedly dazing to his companions, who could see practically nothing to justify his confidence.

"Here's a prize of war," declared Eustace, pausing to pick up an old felt hat, somewhat the worse for wear, which lay by the roadside. "I reckon that fellow was going some when he lost that," he said, with a laugh, as he exhibited his trophy to his companions.

"Bedad, there was a hoigh wind around his ears

'bout thot toime," commented Barney. "'Twas a tall gait he was afther strikin'."

"Him run, lak one beeg moose," declared Sol.

"Looks like a close shave for him," declared Eustace, pointing to a bullet hole in the crown.

"It was thot close, it must have singed the hair av him," said Barney.

"Him Boggs's bullet," declared Sol, confidently.

"No wonder he ran," chuckled Eustace, as he rolled up the hat, and stuffed it into his hip pocket. "He was probably convinced that the next shot would come lower."

"Leave-um trail here," announced Sol, pausing by a windfall that lay beside the road.

"Why, that leads down into the Cedar Swamp," declared Eustace, incredulously, as the Indian pointed the way to the swamp.

"Good ridge back side," asserted Sol.

"Think they made a short cut, do you?" asked Eustace.

"Dat so," declared the Indian.

"Perhaps they wanted for to throw us off the scent," declared Barney.

"Perhaps both," agreed Sol. "His-t!" he added, with his fingers on his lips. "Some one come."

Through the heavy growths that lay beyond the tote-road came the unmistakable sound of some one making his laborious way over the windfalls, and through the underbrush.

"It may be our luck to run onto Peters an' his spalpeens roight here," whispered Barney, with enthusiasm.

"One man," asserted Sol, briefly.

"Let us hope it's old Gusty himself," said Eustace.

"Bedad, if it is, he'll be for thinkin' he's landed himsilf in a hornet's nest," added Barney.

Eustace laughed softly. "I believe you'd rather get into a scrap any time, Barney, than to eat a good dinner," he said, with conviction.

"Arrah! the joy av it," responded Barney, with enthusiasm.

The steps came nearer. Two bushy young fir-trees were pushed aside, and a weazened old face, framed in white hair and a snow-white beard, gazed out upon them with an anxious air of inquiry and uncertainty.

For a moment they stood gazing at him in open-mouthed amazement.

Eustace was the first to recover his voice.

"It's Father Time!" he gasped.

A "SNACK" AT THE COOK'S WANGAN. — *Page 280.*

CHAPTER XXIII

GUSTY PETERS IN THE TOILS

For a moment the hermit stood looking intently at Eustace and his companions, and then, evidently assured that they were well disposed towards him, came slowly forward to meet them.

"And how is Father Time to-day?" asked Eustace, extending a friendly hand, which the hermit shook in silent and solemn dignity.

"Nature is kind to me — thank you," was the response.

"Begorra, it's moighty glad we are to see ye, me ancient and honorable frind," said Barney O'Connor, with a cordial shake of the newcomer's hand, "but ain't ye a long ways from home?"

"It's not far to the still beaver waters," returned the hermit, briefly.

Even Sol, usually careless in matters of social amenity, extended his hand in hearty greeting to the hermit.

"Seeum boys?" he asked, with a searching glance at Umber's sphinx-like features.

"They rest secure," returned the hermit, with a wave of his long arm, indicating the section of country that lay behind him.

"What? Really! You don't say!" exclaimed Eustace, excitedly. "So you know where they are?"

The hermit nodded.

"Bedad, an' where is it?" demanded Barney, eagerly.

"At the heart, in the still beaver waters," returned the hermit, gravely.

Eustace looked puzzled.

"How came they there?" he asked, in very evident perplexity.

"Bad men led them through the shadow path, and held them in their abode, above the leaping waters. They escaped from them, and fled into the desert, whither the wicked spirit pursued them. I succored them. I took them over the flood, and concealed them in the heart by the still beaver waters. Such as I had gave I unto them. But alas! I knew that the hosts of the wicked were searching for us, and we have not the might to cope with them. I came to summon you to the fray."

"Bedad, thot story is a bur-rd. It's ivery bit as clear as a London fog," declared Barney O'Connor, scratching his head in evident bewilderment. "I githered, however, a faint suggistion of a scrap which I hope was no drame."

"It was a trifle hazy," admitted Eustace. "Still, I gather that he knows where the boys are, and that they are safe."

"He tellum all," interposed Sol Soc, impatiently. "He say bad man takum boy; shutum in camp. Boy

get away. Windigo findum. Takeum home. Hide-um. Dey dere now."

"You're right, Sol," declared Eustace, heartily. "Barney and I are dull boys when it comes to the voice of Nature. I reckon we haven't learned the language."

"We go wit' him," said Sol.

"All right," responded Eustace. "Tell him to lead the way. We'll follow him."

"Goum still beaver water," said the Indian.

The hermit nodded, gravely, and, turning about, led the way through the tangled labyrinth of swamp growth and windfalls that had proved so trying to Norman and Fred on their enforced march to Gusty Peters's camp.

"Oh wurra, an' it's the way to the pit entoirely," puffed Barney O'Connor. "'Tis mony th' toight place I've bin in; but shure this is the worrst iver."

"Courage, old boy!" responded Eustace, with a laugh. "Remember 'beyond the Alps lies Italy'."

"I'd rither go through the tunnel," returned Barney.

A little later the members of the party emerged from the black growth, and made their way up the side of the hardwood ridge.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Barney, as, reeking with perspiration, he seated himself upon a windfall, to the very evident disgust of Sol Soc and the hermit. "Italy at last! Fetch me some macaroni!"

"We come fin' boy," said Sol, impatiently.

"All roight. Go on wid ye, the old stame-ingine

thot ye are," responded Barney, with a sigh of resignation, rising to his feet.

A little later the party passed over the brow of the ridge. They paused for a moment for a drink of the clear cold water that bubbled from the spring, and then resumed their tramp down the slope.

"Shure an' it's a moighty uncertain futting ye hov here," commented Barney, as they made their way from tussock to tussock across the shaky surface of the meadow.

"Holdum good," said Sol, reassuringly.

They crossed the log that bridged the sluggish waters of the stream, and scrambled up the steep bank that lay beyond.

Here they paused for a moment, and examined with satisfaction the well-defined foot-path that wound its sombre way through the heavy black growth.

"This has been in recent use," declared Eustace.

"A blind man cud see thot," responded Barney.

"Probably that's why you and I were able to discover it," said Eustace, dryly.

"His-st!" exclaimed Sol, in a low, warning tone. "Some one come. Hideum ourselfs."

The members of the party hastened to conceal themselves behind a large hemlock windfall that lay in the woods a short distance from the foot-path.

"Gusty Peters," whispered Sol, as the heavy features of the Allegash boss came into view up the sharp incline of the slope.

"Hold him up. We want him," said Eustace, eagerly.

Having reached the top of the embankment, Peters started with a nervous stride along the foot-path. His clothes were covered with thick, black muck, which also matted together his heavy head of hair. His coarse features were convulsed with rage, and it was plainly evident that he was not in a pleasant frame of mind.

"Halt! Putum up hands!" Sol Soc had stepped quickly into the path ahead of Peters and was covering the big Allegash boss with his Winchester.

Peters obeyed the unexpected order with a gasp of surprise; but in a moment recovered himself and half turned as if to run; but at that moment Barney O'Connor and Eustace sprang upon him from the rear and bore him to the ground. Peters was a powerful man, and one who was not to be subdued without a struggle. With loud, angry curses he twisted and squirmed, and exerted his great strength to the utmost in an effort to throw off his assailants. But both of them were wiry, powerful men, and not to be dislodged. Presently Eustace got a firm grip upon his throat, and the fight was quickly ended. The big Allegash boss lay gasping and subdued upon the ground, where Eustace soon had him securely bound with some strong rope he had brought along with him.

"Begorra, 'twas an illigant scrap he put up," declared Barney O'Connor, as he surveyed the prisoner with very evident satisfaction.

"And a useless one," declared Eustace, in a tone of disgust. "You let your nasty temper run away with your judgment that time, Peters."

"Cowards!" gasped Peters, scornfully. "Jumped on me from behind. Took me foul. It wasn't a fair fight."

"We were not looking for a fight," responded Eustace, sharply. "We were looking for you."

"An' bedad we appear for to hov ye," interposed O'Connor. "Possission, me big frind, is noine pints av the law."

"It's mighty little attention ye've paid t' th' law," growled Peters, "a-committin' highway robbery on a man as was attendin' strictly to his own business. An' now I suppose ye want my wallet," he added, in a tone of sneering sarcasm.

"You may keep it in your pocket for the present," responded Eustace, coolly. "I reckon you'll need it before you get out of this scrape. You've got a few things to answer for before you go at liberty again."

"Wal, what are they?" insisted Peters, defiantly.

"We expect to tell in good season," replied Eustace, calmly. "In the meantime you must be patient."

"An' if ye can't be entoirely patient, why ye must be as patient as ye can," added Barney O'Connor.

"Yes, yes," growled Peters. "It's mighty easy for a coward like you to blow cheap wit on a fellow when he's down. If I was untied I'd pin them long ears behind yer head an' make a breakfast on ye."

"An' bedad it wud be the wor-rst wan for ye degistion ye ever tried to ate," returned Barney, hotly. "Untie the murtherin' ole spalpeen an' lave me thry it out wid 'im," he pleaded.

Eustace met this request with an amused shake of the head. He was used to O'Connor's fiery moods.

"Be patient, Barney," he admonished, with a chuckle.

The Irishman immediately subsided.

"'Tis me own medicine ye are afther givin' me," he remarked, with a sheepish grin, "an' Oi'm not sayin' thot I don't desarve it."

"And where now, Father Time?" inquired Eustace, turning to the hermit.

"My canoe is under the bank," responded Umber. "The shore is better on this side of the stream."

Eustace glanced at him in surprise. The hermit's tone was calm, and his answer direct and matter of fact.

"I reckon the old bye has lucid intervals now an' thin," commented O'Connor, in a low tone.

"How many will your canoe hold comfortably?" questioned Eustace.

"Four."

"Well, I guess I'll let you go ahead with Sol and Barney. Then you can come back for Gusty and me. I think we'd better hide ourselves in the alders under the bank. There's no predicting who might show up along this path."

With the assistance of Sol and Barney, Peters was

carried to a place of concealment in the alders where he was left in charge of Eustace. O'Connor and the Indian then embarked in the canoe with the hermit, and made their way up the dead-water, Sol handling the bow paddle with the characteristic grace and skill of his race, while Umber in the stern showed himself a worthy mate for him.

" Bedad, this is one illegant place," declared Barney, with enthusiasm, as they rounded the headland with its heavy forest growth.

" These are the still beaver waters," said the hermit.

" Beaver makeum dam on stream below," explained Sol.

" An' begorra, it's quite a bit o' wather it's afther holdin' back," declared O'Connor, in surprise.

A moment later the hermit turned his canoe up the narrow stream beyond the headland, and he and Sol worked their way carefully between its alder-fringed banks. An exclamation of wonder and delight broke from Barney as they finally emerged from the alder-grown stream upon the broad basin of the watery expanse which Norman had called the " Punch Bowl."

" The Devil's Ink Pot," announced Umber.

" An' will-named it is," declared Barney, as he gazed upon the black liquid muck that lay so near the surface.

As they approached the island, which Umber conceived to be the heart of the Punch Bowl, they were startled by the sound of angry voices.

" Some one is faling roiled," remarked O'Connor.

Umber made no reply; but, with strong strokes of his paddle, joined forces with Sol in driving the canoe through the water at an increased rate of speed. A moment later they came in full view of Jake Jasper in a warm exchange of words with Norman Carver and Fred Warner who were facing him on the opposite side of the channel that separated the island from the mainland. With a few strong strokes of their paddles Sol and the hermit drove the canoe onto the rear side of the island. They were greatly relieved to find that they had made the passage without being discovered by Jasper or the boys, who were too intense in their interchange of hot words, to take much heed of anything else.

"Begorra, we must capture thot man," declared Barney, with rising enthusiasm, "but how shall we get afther him? If we go in the canoe he'll be afther seein' us an' clarin' out."

"Where the wind listeth he will run," said the hermit, solemnly.

"Bedad, an' Oi'm doubtin' he's thot swift," objected Barney.

"We let Windigo land us on main shore," said Sol. "Go still through woods. Come in behind Jasper. Cut him off."

"Begorra, thot's the idea," said Barney, delightedly. "Wid you an' me on one side, and the strame on the ither, he'd shure be betwane the divil and th' dape sea."

"Ugh!" grunted the Indian. Any further response,

however, was promptly cut short by a rattling in the underbrush on the shore, close against which the canoe was resting. A moment later the bushes parted and a small fox terrier dog ran down the ledges.

"Good old Bozy. He very nice dog," said the hermit, whereupon the terrier frisked about in a perfect delirium of joy — but without a bark.

"Your dog?" asked Sol.

"My best friend," said the hermit, "and almost my only one," he added, with a sigh.

At this moment there was a sound of footsteps in the bushes, through which Fred Warner suddenly made his appearance upon the shore. He stopped short in amazement as his eye rested upon the canoe.

"The tip o' the mornin' to ye, Fred," said Barney, airily, in very evident enjoyment of his surprise.

"Howdy," grunted Sol.

"How are you, boys?" returned Warner, joyfully, finding his voice. "I was almost afraid it might be a dream. The sight of you is good for the appetite."

"If ye go back there wid Norman, and kape your eyes on Black Jake Jasper, I shouldn't wondher if ye'd see something drop before long," said Barney. "Father Toime is goin' to land Sol an' me on the main shore below the island."

"All right, I'll be watching for you," responded Fred. "I begin to see Jake's finish."

"Stayum there!" said Sol. "Windigo paddlum us to shore. Come back. Get you."

"Good idea, Sol," responded Warner, with a laugh. "I see that you don't want anything to break in on that red-hot discussion Norman is having with Black Jake, and I reckon you're right."

"We'll be afther doin' th' breakin' in oursilves," interposed Barney.

"The day of wrath is at hand," declared Umber, in lugubrious tones.

"It is thot," assented Barney, "but there's no nade of tears. Shure it's a day of cilebration."

Fred Warner stood upon the island ledges and watched Sol an Barney as they made their quick way in the canoe across the intervening waters to the shore of the Punch Bowl. Once there they clambered up the bank and disappeared in the thick woods.

For a moment the hermit sat motionless in his canoe looking intently in the direction they had gone, although it was evident to Warner that the steep embankment, and the heavy forest growth that crowned it, must have speedily hidden them from view.

There was something weird and patriarchal in the unstudied pose of the hermit, and Warner could not help a feeling of pity for the lonely old man. His own people were poor, but their farm was a fertile one, and while they had always felt the pinch of poverty, they had never known what it was to go hungry. Warner determined that Dave Umber should never again have that experience if he could help it.

Presently the hermit awoke from his reverie with a

start, and came, with long, sweeping dips of the paddle, to the place where Fred Warner stood waiting for him.

"I am a man of peace," he said, as he brought his canoe alongside the shore. "But retribution pursueth the wicked, and will not be denied. Get in," he added, addressing Fred. "It will be all over by the time we reach the camp."

Fred took his place in the bow of the canoe, and together he and Umber drove the frail craft around the curving shores of the island. They reached the opposite shore just in season to see Black Jake Jasper in his furious but futile struggle with Sol Soc and Barney O'Connor.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE RETURN TO CHAMBERLAIN DAM

"Rist aisy, ye spalpeen!"

Barney O'Connor could not restrain a grin of satisfaction, as he stood looking down upon the discomfited Jasper, who lay bound and helpless on the shore of the dead-water.

"You have your innin's now. I'll make ye sing a different tune when I git mine," growled the prisoner.

Black Jake was certainly a repulsive-looking figure, as he uttered this threat. His long, black hair was dishevelled, his clothes torn in several places, while his coarse features, distorted with rage, were rendered more gruesome by a thin stream of blood that trickled down one of his cheeks from a scratch received in his frantic struggle with Sol and Barney.

"Ye've already hod yer innin's an' it's a moighty poor game ye've played," retorted O'Connor, hotly. "Ye've reached yer toime of explainin', an' a sorry lot av it ye'll hov to do."

"No talkum," grunted Sol.

"That means you, Barney," laughed Norman.

"Oi'm dumb," responded O'Connor, good-naturedly, "but shure his insolence provoked me to blarney."

At this point the conversation was interrupted by a hail from Fred, who, in company with the hermit, had rounded the lower end of the island. Both he and Umber were making their paddles bend beneath their vigorous sweeps, and were driving the canoe towards the hermit's home landing at racing speed.

"Hello, there!" shouted Warner.

"How do," returned Sol.

"Have you any freight for us?"

"Be the powers, we hov thot," rejoined Barney. "About th' swatest load, Oi'm afther thinkin', thot ye iver carried."

In a few moments the canoe was alongside the landing, and Fred was viewing the prostrate Jasper with outspoken satisfaction.

"Good job!" he said, delightedly.

"Shure 'twas a short horse, soon curried," declared Barney, with very evident elation. "An' how does it impriss ye, Father Toime?" he added, addressing the hermit.

"'There is no peace,' saith the Lord, 'unto the wicked,'" responded Umber, soberly.

"Roight ye are," conceded Barney. "Sure an' it pays any mon to lade a dacint loife. 'Tis many toimes the divil has timpted me; but shure it's always throuble Oi've found all the days o' my loife a-chasin' afther 'im."

"What are we going to do with Jake?" interposed Norman.

"Windigo an' me takum out," replied Sol. "Windigo come back. Get you."

"That's a good idea," agreed Norman.

The canoe was swung up to the landing to enable Warner to go ashore, after which the hermit pushed it across the dead-water to the place where Sol and Barney were waiting with the prisoner. Jasper was unceremoniously laid upon the bottom of the frail craft very much as if he had been a bale of hay, and, with Sol in the bow, and Umber in the stern, the canoe took its departure. In a few minutes it had passed from sight.

"An' shure it's a long ways to dinner," exclaimed Barney, looking, disconsolately, across the dead-water.

"A very short cut when you know how to get here," responded Norman, with a laugh.

"Bedad, it's too shallow to swim, an' too dape to wade," declared Barney, whimsically. "Mebbe though, ye already hov yer mon Froiday," he added, with a wave of his hand towards Warner.

"This is a little republic over here," declared Norman. "Every man is on the same level."

"Begorra, an' it's moighty attractive ye sound," declared Barney. "Ho! ho! 'Tis a portable bridge ye hov," he added, as Norman pushed the log from the island shore with the pickpole, and began swinging it across the dead-water.

"A gift from Black Jake and Gusty Peters," explained Warner.

"And I hope you'll have better luck walking it than Gusty Peters did," added Norman.

A gleam of comprehension shone in O'Connor's eyes.

"Bedad, an' I rickin as how some wan jiggled the toight rope," he said. "'Twas me grate an' onexpicted pleasure to mate Mister Paters in the woods beyint! Wurra! wurra! but what a soight he was! No respictible pig wud 'a' bin seen associatin' wid him."

"Where is he now?" demanded Norman, with deep interest.

"He's enjoyin' a naded rist in the black growth beyint the meadow, wid Eustace a-watchin' over him to see thot he kapes off the grass," responded O'Connor. "He's waiting wid great patience for his frind Jake. 'Tis an afficting reunion they'll hov prisintly."

While this conversation was going on Norman had swung his log across the dead-water, and Barney ran lightly over it to the island.

"Arrah, but this is a bur-rd av a place!" he exclaimed, as he examined the hermit's camp and its surroundings. "Shure Robinson Crusoe wasn't in it wid Father Toime."

After the trio had made their round of the little clearing in a tour of inspection, that was a constant delight to O'Connor, they returned to the cabin, glad of its friendly shelter from the summer sun.

"An' now tell me iverything thot happened afther ye lift camp," said Barney, when they had seated themselves in the hermit's rude but comfortable chairs.

In a few words Norman related the exciting experiences that had befallen him and Fred since they started out upon their scouting tour — a narrative to which Barney gave the closest attention.

"The spalpeens!" he exclaimed, at its close. "To think av the nerve av thim! It's a satisfaction to know thot we made no mistake in gatherin' in Gusty Peters; but, be me sowl, 'twas a bould bluff he made. Be the powers, ye'd hov thought by the way he blustered around thot we'd made the mistake av tyin' up the angel av innocence. Wurra! but what a foine burst av righteous indignation the windy ole haythen was afther tratin' us to."

"He's the crown prince of bluffers," declared Norman.

"Begorra, Oi'm thinkin' he's the king av thim all," responded Barney. "Gusty Peters a game warden!" he exclaimed, with a laugh. "Wurra! wurra! the gall av him."

"Now tell us what happened at camp after we left," said Warner.

"It's a short and swate story," rejoined Barney. In his own way he proceeded to relate to the boys what occurred at the camp after they left it.

"I should have thought they'd have known better than to have made another attempt upon the dam," declared Norman. "They must have known that Eustace would have it guarded."

"I rickin the laders were thot desperate thot they

were willin' to take long chances," declared Barney, "and as for the ithers it was ivident from what Louis Barbotte tould us, thot they hod bin loied to entoirely. 'Twas small notion they hod av what they were goin' up aginst."

"Gusty probably thought it was then or never with them," commented Warner. "It was evident that they wouldn't have any further chances after Norman and I got back to camp."

"They moight hov suspicted thot yer failure to come back wud hov made us a troifle more suspicious, if they hod bothered to use their heads," said Barney. "But thot's bin the trouble wid the spalpeens roight along. They've done all their thinkin' — what little there was — wid their heels."

The conversation was interrupted at this point by a grating sound upon the sandy beach, and going out of the cabin they found Umber waiting for them with the canoe.

"An' how did ye foind Eustace?" demanded Barney.

"His cause was prospering," responded the hermit.

"It's roight glad Oi am to hear it," said Barney, in a tone of relief. "Oi was a-fearin' thot some av Peters's min moight come to his riscue."

"I don't imagine that there are enough of them left to be very formidable," declared Norman. "I think that Peters and Jasper were the ringleaders, and pretty nearly the whole show."

"I reckon the rest of them are now racing through

the woods along the Allegash, like a flock of turkeys with their heads cut off," added Warner.

"Very loikely," agreed Barney, "but Oi'm thinkin' we know av at least three thot won't do ony racin' for some toime to come. How about this, Father Toime?" he added, turning to Umber. "Will this canoe hold four av us?"

"It will carry us safely over the flood," responded Umber, gravely.

"Which I suspict manes over the still baver wathers," said Barney. "Arrah! What a funny ole joker ye are, to be shure," he continued, giving the hermit a jovial slap on the back.

"Desist! worm of the dust, desist!" cried Umber, in a high, thin voice, drawing himself up to his full height, and pointing a reproachful finger at O'Connor.

"I beg yer pardon, sor, if Oi was afther treadin' on the tail av ye coat," said Barney, in a conciliatory tone. "Arrah, the dignity av him!" he added, in an undertone, to the boys.

"Embark," said the hermit, briefly.

A little later the canoe was making its rapid way across the dead-water with Barney in the bow, the hermit in the stern, and the boys carefully stowed away between them. However much Umber may have resented O'Connor's familiar ways, it was evident that he quite approved of his skilful use of the paddle, for, as they went on, his grim visage gradually relaxed into something resembling a smile of satisfaction.

Arriving at the meadow they found Eustace and Sol keeping guard over Peters and Jasper, a short distance back from the foot-path that led through the black-growth. It was evident that the two men had found no opportunity to exchange confidences, for Peters's swarthy face plainly showed his surprise and apprehension at the appearance of Norman and Fred.

Before starting on their return to the camp, the members of the party enjoyed a hearty meal on the generous lunch that had been brought along on the trip, and which had been left in charge of Eustace. It was an opportunity that evidently did not often come Umber's way, and he improved it to the utmost.

" Begorra, it's some fat we'd be puttin' on that ould bye's bones, if we cud hov him a wake or two," declared the irrepressible Barney, who was considerably impressed with the hermit's gastronomic powers.

Peters and Jasper sullenly refused to eat anything.

Norman improved the opportunity while the meal was in progress to relate in detail to Eustace, the adventures that had befallen him and Warner in the less than three days since they left the camp.

Eustace was not a little amused at Norman's story of Peters's attempt to impersonate a game warden, and laughed heartily, to the very evident discomfiture of the big Allegash boss, who was of necessity, an unwilling listener to the narrative.

" Him a game warden! " commented Barney O'Connor, contemptuously, " whin ivery wan thot iver heard

av him knows that he's the wor-rst ould poacher on the Allegash. It's in jail he shud bin years ago."

"It's mighty easy for a feller like you to sass a man when he can't help himself," growled Peters, resentfully.

"Oi'll hov the boys fince in an arana for us, an' thry it out wid ye ony day," returned Barney, hotly.

"You must admit, Gusty," interposed Eustace, "that as a game warden you are a good deal of a joke."

"That's all I meant it to be," asserted Peters, lamely.

"I don't know about that," returned Eustace. "You not only impersonated an officer; but you availed yourself of the pretense to make a false arrest of Carver and Warner, and to detain them against their will. I am inclined to think that the court may not look upon the affairs in quite the humorous light that you pretend to. Indeed I am inclined to think it will prove a rather costly experience for you. Go on, Norman."

Continuing his narrative Norman related the conversation he had overheard between Peters and a man whom the big Allegash boss addressed as "Falkenham."

"Austin Falkenham!" exclaimed Eustace. "Just what I thought! I've suspected from the first that some of the big fellows were back of this whole thing."

Peters's face clearly showed his surprise and consternation at this unexpected revelation. The sweat stood out upon his face, and he was plainly depressed and disconcerted.

"Ye must be mistaken 'bout thet, sonny," he protested, nervously. "Ye prob'ly dreamed it."

"It's no dream," asserted Norman, stoutly. "Everything occurred exactly as I have said it did."

"Remarkable boy he'd be," said Eustace, in a tone of sarcasm, "not only to dream the name of a man he never saw or heard of; but also to be able afterwards to describe him so accurately that any one who ever saw him would know him at once."

"How d'ye know he never saw 'im afore?" persisted Peters, querulously.

"I happen to know that he was never in Maine until he came here last winter to work for the Lakeland Lumber Company," retorted Eustace. "I happened to be boss of that crew, and I do not remember that we were favored by any calls from Mr. Austin Falkenham. You never met him before you saw him at Gusty's camp, did you, Carver?"

"Never," responded Norman, with emphasis.

"I think we'll have no difficulty in proving that fact, Peters," declared Eustace, confidently, "and my own opinion is that you won't gain much by trying to deny it."

"I won't stand for anything but the truth — ye might jest es well understand thet from th' start," snapped Peters, angrily. "We ain't goin' t' be lied erbout or imposed upon — are we, Jake?"

"Not by a long shot," responded Jasper, with an effort at bravado. His voice was hollow and insincere,

however, and he was obviously depressed. Indeed it was apparent that both the Allegash leader and his lieutenant were in anything but a buoyant frame of mind. They were evidently impressed with the fact that events had broken badly so far as they were concerned, and that the future was far from bright for them.

At the close of the rough but substantial meal, the cords which bound the legs of Peters and Jasper were removed. They were then bound together by a stout rope, and started for camp, Eustace and the hermit leading the way, with the others bringing up in the rear. The journey was necessarily a slow one, the bound arms of the prisoners making their progress slow, especially through the swamp, where the tangle of the thick-growing cedars and windfalls disputed their passage. They were all relieved when they finally emerged into the tote-road, where the walking was comparatively easy.

Here they sat down to rest upon a long spruce windfall by the roadside, and Peters, who had maintained a sullen silence on the march, improved the opportunity to speak.

"What air ye a-goin' to do with us?" he demanded, in a surly tone.

"I don't know," responded Eustace.

"I believe when we last went over this route in your company you were kind enough to tell us in answer to that same question that we were headed for court," said Warner. "It would be even more funny, wouldn't

it, if our positions were reversed and you were really headed there yourself."

"I've noticed that you and Jake have not been in the jovial and humorous frame of mind to-day, that made you so entertaining on that trip," added Norman. "Why so glum?"

"Shet up!" growled Peters. "Youngsters like you should show some respect for their elders."

"Begorra, wid the experience they've hod wid ye, it's moighty little rispict they can have for ye," interposed Barney, "an' what's more, ye don't desarve ony, ye ould rascal!"

Peters's teeth came together like the jaws of a trap, and he made the rest of the journey in silence.

The men of the crew left their work on the dam as the party came in sight of the camp, and came forward to meet them with many expressions of satisfaction. The boys were given a rough but hearty welcome, that made it very evident that they held a warm place in the hearts of the men.

THE REAR DRIVE CLEARING THE SHORES. — *Page 304.*

CHAPTER XXV

THE ESCAPE OF PETERS AND JASPER

While none of the men at the Chamberlain dam camp had any respect for Peters and Jasper, there was one there who had a special hatred for them, and who was not at all backward in making it manifest. The wound of Louis Barbotte, although not dangerous, was a painful one, and had not tended to improve his naturally choleric temper. He had remained in his bunk since his capture of the night before, morose and sullen, accepting the favors that were done him in an ungracious spirit. In the apprehension that his wound might prove fatal terror had loosened his tongue; but once convinced that his fears were groundless, he had suddenly become taciturn, and had answered the men who had waited upon him in surly monosyllables.

The sight of Peters and Jasper, however, suddenly loosened his tongue.

"Saprè diable!" he hissed, suddenly sitting up in his bunk. "Yo' t'ink eet ver' ver' fonny for keek oop de row! Get Louis Barbotte on troub'. Yo' ronne way ver' fas'; yo' kep' yo' skeen all whole. Bagosh, yo' t'ink yo' play me wan ver' smart treek; yo' laugh yo'se'f on yo' face!"

The features of the wounded man were distorted with rage, and his voice rose to a thin crescendo.

"Ba cripe! I keel yo'! I keel yo'!" he shrieked, in a frenzy of passion.

With a sudden movement he snatched a rifle from the pegs above his bunk and snapped it at Peters, who staggered back, with a gasp of terror. Fortunately the weapon was not loaded, and Barney O'Connor lost no time in snatching it from the infuriated Frenchman, who sank back upon his bunk weeping hysterically.

"Great Scott! What's the matter with ye, Louis?" demanded Peters, when he recovered his voice. "What ye mean a-tryin' for t' murder me? Honest Injun, I never did ye no harm in my life — hope t' die if I did. I was allus your friend. What in the world's got into ye? Have ye gone clean daft?"

"Don' yo' lie for me!" shouted Barbotte, with an effort to control himself. "Yo' ban no frien'. Yo' tole me com' help for blow oop dam. Yo' say no wan on guard; jus' easy leetle job for earn me wan honder dollarre. Yo' bat yo' life dere was ban guard. He shoot me rat down! prattee queeck, rat away. Yo' an' Black Jake ronne off, jus' fas' yo' can, an' lef' me! Oh, yass, yass, yo' ban wan ver' beeg frien' for me. Ba cripe! Yo' look out on yo'se'f. I keel yo' yet."

"Begorra, it's grate frinds they are indade," said Barney, glancing from Barbotte to Jasper. "'Tis a rare bur-rd thot can hov two av the loikes av thim in his gang an' escape a funeral."

"The man's out of his head! He's clean, ravin' crazy! He doesn't know what he's sayin'!" exclaimed Peters, in an agitated voice. "Ye mustn't put any stock in him. There's no truth in what he's a-tellin' of ye. I never hed nothin' to do with blowin' up the dam."

"Big lie. No helpum!" declared Sol Soc, in a tone of disgust.

"I reckon es how 't would be better for ye in th' long run to tell th' truth an' shame th' devil," admonished Tom Boggs, who had been present and witnessed Barbotte's frenzied act.

"It's in grate luck ye are to be livin' this minute," added O'Connor.

Peters sank down weakly upon the deacon seat.

"Untie my hands, and I'll — I'll take keer o' myself," he said. "If ye don't it's your duty t' keep thet fellow away from me."

"Ye'll be responsible for any harm thet comes from him," supplemented Jasper.

"Look here, Barbotte," said Eustace, sharply. "It's about time for you to cool down and be a man. No one ever gained anything by trying to take the law into his own hands. I want no more of it — no more of it. Do you understand?"

"He mak' me for be wan beeg fool. He —" began Barbotte.

"Dry up!" interrupted Eustace, peremptorily. "Not another word. If you stay here you'll behave yourself. and try no more capers like that. Are you going to

be decent, and give us no more trouble, if I let you stay here?"

Barbotte was silent.

"Answer me!" insisted Eustace, sternly.

"Ya — yass," said Barbotte, in a choked voice.

"See that you remember it," continued Eustace. "Peters and Jasper are my prisoners as well as yourself. I intend that no harm shall come to any of you while you are in my custody. If you attempt any violence again while you are in my care I'll tie you up in a way that won't be pleasant for you. Just bear that in mind."

Barbotte made no response, and Eustace turned to Peters and Jasper.

"It won't do either of you two men the slightest good to lie," he said. "I have evidence enough to convict you both in any court in the State. You were the men who were in charge of the work of blowing up the dam here. Failing in your first attempt, you came back here to try again, but met with a warm reception. I think you must be satisfied by this time that the whole business was a mistake on your part. You might as well understand, first as last, that this dam is here to stay. The men behind us will not stand for its removal."

"I've quit. I'm all through," declared Peters. "If I ever git out o' this 'ere country you nor any one else will ever see hide nor hair o' me agin. What d'ye say, Jake?"

"Same with me," asserted Jasper, promptly. "I was ready to quit some time ago."

"I believe you showed the boys a commission as a game warden," continued Eustace.

"Yes," admitted Peters.

"I'd like to look at it," continued Eustace.

"I — I left it at the camp," declared Peters, very red in the face, and evidently ill at ease.

"I think you're mistaken about that," said Eustace, coolly. "I reckon you have it in your pocket right now. Just run through him, Sol, and see if I'm right."

Peters rose quickly to his feet.

"I protest agin' any sech doin's!" he exclaimed, angrily. "The articles in my pocket is my private property. They ain't ary one on ye got any right to tetch 'em."

"Your protests don't go, Gusty," said Eustace, calmly. "Search him, Sol."

"Hol' on — hol' on thar," cried Peters, in alarm. "They's no call to do thet. I'll show ye all I've got."

"Thot's a moighty sinsible conclusion on your part," declared Barney O'Connor.

"When I need any of your assistance, Barney, I'll call for it," said Eustace, coldly.

For once the irrepressible O'Connor was plainly disconcerted.

"Oi beg ye pardon, Misther Eustace," he said, humbly. "Oi'll not butt in agin. Oi'll be as dumb as an oysther."

"You'll have t' untie my hands if I'm t' unload my pockets for ye," continued Peters.

"All right," replied Eustace. "You may untie them, Sol, on both him and Jake."

In a short time the Indian had removed the ropes that bound the arms of Peters and Jasper, and the prisoners were stretching their cramped limbs in evident appreciation of the relief that had been afforded them.

After a moment's hesitation Peters pulled out a large official-looking envelope from his breast pocket, and handed it to Eustace.

"Is that all?"

Eustace was looking Peters squarely in the eye, and the big Allegash boss was rendered visibly uneasy by it.

"It's all ye asked for," he said, uneasily.

"But you have some other papers there," persisted Eustace.

"Only a few private letters. Ye surely don't want those!"

Peters was sweating freely, and it was evident that he was not a little disturbed by the turn of events.

"I want to see them all," declared Eustace, firmly. "I'll decide later how many of them I will keep."

Peters turned towards the door as if looking in desperation for some means of escape; but Sol Soc was blocking the way, and, with a muttered curse, the big Allegash boss drew forth a package af letters and handed them to Eustace, who immediately put them in his pocket.

"I'll examine them later," he said. "Just now I am interested in your commission as game warden."

He seated himself coolly upon the deacon seat, and drew forth the paper contained in the big envelope.

"Why, this runs to R. B. Peters," he said. "Those are not your initials."

"No," admitted Peters.

"Your initials are G. A.?"

"Yes."

"And this commission belongs to your brother, doesn't it?"

"Yes."

"Of course you know that you have laid yourself liable by impersonating an officer?"

"I seem to hev laid myself liable pretty generally," admitted Peters.

"Well, there's no doubt of that," said Eustace.

"I've made a rich haul, Barney, in those letters," declared Eustace to O'Connor, a little later.

"Oi suspicted as much," responded Barney.

"They lay the whole plot bare. It is true that the dynamite scheme was Gusty's; but that was only an incident in the working out of the plot that originated with some much bigger men. Peters, after all, was only a tool. He had nothing personal at stake in the matter."

"I don't see what further ye need av him now thot ye hov the letthers."

Eustace gave a cautious glance about him.

"I don't," he admitted. "He and Jasper are a couple of white elephants on my hands. When our people get these letters and quietly notify certain big Allegash operators that they have them whenever needed, it is pretty safe to say that there will be no further attempts to destroy the dam here. It will be peace and good will on the Chamberlain waters for many years to come."

"I rickin ye'd betther hov a quiet talk wid Sol Soc," said Barney, dryly. "He can see a hole in a groindstone ivery toime — if ye'll only take the throuble to pint it out to him."

"Thanks!" returned Eustace, with a smile. "That's a good suggestion, Barney. I think I'll act upon it."

A little later Eustace sat apart from the men of his crew in very earnest conversation with Peters. It was evident that the big boss of the Allegash was in a decidedly subdued and docile frame of mind, and the men had no doubt that he was trying to persuade Eustace to make matters as easy as he could for him and Jasper when they were finally brought before the courts.

When the crew retired for the night Eustace took the precaution to bind up the arms and legs of Peters and Jasper, an ordeal to which they submitted without complaint. The two prisoners slept between O'Connor and Sol Soc, the Indian having the post nearest the door.

The members of the crew were not a little surprised in the morning to find that both men had made good

their escape. Some of the men were disposed to pursue them; but Eustace promptly put a veto upon the idea, declaring that, with the start they had, it would not be possible to overtake them.

Later in the day a man from one of the Allegash crews, on his way to the East Branch, stopped over night with Eustace and his men.

"I met Gusty Peters and Black Jake Jasper on the way up," he remarked casually in the course of conversation. "They were going down the Allegash in a canoe, an' I jedged by the time they was makin' thet they thought the ole Nick himself was after 'em."

"Oi think they've finished their work in this section," declared Barney O'Connor, and the newcomer looked decidedly mystified at the laugh which followed. The conversation soon drifted into other channels, however, and the incident was forgotten.

"Well, boys, I reckon we can finish up this job on the dam to-day," said Eustace the next morning, as the men were starting for their work.

"We can thot," responded Barney O'Connor, "and lave it stronger thin it was before."

"I think, Norman, that you and Fred could do your best work for us to-day, by going back to that brook you found and getting us a good big mess of trout. Father Time wants to get back to his farm, and, as I am hoping to get out of here to-morrow, I'm going to turn over some of our provisions to him. I fancy some flour, coffee, beans, bacon, salt, sugar, tea, and a good

supply of pork will not come amiss to him. It will probably take him several days to get all of his supplies to the island; but I thought you boys wouldn't object to toting some of them for him, at least to the short cut that leads through the swamp from the tote-road."

"Not at all," declared Norman.

"It will be a pleasure," added Fred.

"I was going to speak to you about that very matter," continued Norman. "I know that Umber is in need of just the kind of assistance you have given him. I was planning to help him, and will be glad to pay for the supplies you have furnished him."

"Your money will not be any good for that purpose," returned Eustace. "I feel that the company owes him that much, and that it will want to pay the debt. If you want to help him, however, you had better do so in money. Then he will be able to secure what supplies he needs from the sporting-camps."

"That's a good suggestion," returned Norman, with enthusiasm. "I'm going to start him with the lion's share of my emergency fund."

"I think he will make good use of anything you may give him," said Eustace.

"Do you know anything about him?" asked Norman.

"Only what that fellow that stopped with us last night said."

Norman looked surprised.

"I didn't suppose he knew him," he said.

"I don't know as he did," returned Eustace; "but it appears that he had done some guiding on the Allegash, and heard of him. It seems that Father Time is something of a character in this section."

"What did he say about him?" asked Norman, deeply interested.

"Well, it seems that he was once a practising lawyer in some Massachusetts city. An epidemic of some kind came along and carried off his wife and two children — a boy and a girl — and left him about distracted. He came up into this country to rest and build up. He's been here ever since. Of course he isn't all there; but they do say that there's quite a thread of horse sense running through his vagaries."

"I'm glad to know about it," declared Norman. "I suspected from his language that he was an educated man. I shall try to see that he never again wants enough to eat and wear."

"I had thought about that myself," said Warner. "I'm not in position to do as much as Norman, but I had made up my mind that before fall he would be supplied with a good flock of hens, and a couple of pigs, and something to feed them on."

"I've no doubt he would be glad to get them," said Eustace, heartily. "I'm glad you boys have thought about the old man, for he has certainly done you a good turn, and deserves well at your hands."

A little later the boys, heavily loaded with provisions, were making their way up the tote-road in company

with Umber, who, with the provisions that he carried, was also possessed of a bright new axe — which he evidently looked upon as a prize of the first magnitude. Fred Warner was also equipped with an axe. When they finally reached the point where the short cut across the swamp branched off from the tote-road, the hermit, who was evidently distressed with the fear that they were giving too much of their time to his affairs, begged them to leave him.

"You have been very kind to me," he said, "but I can get along very nicely now. Time is my largest possession."

"We can never begin to repay you for your kindness to us," responded Norman, heartily.

"I was only too glad to be of service," said the hermit. "I may not see you again," he added, "but if you are ever in this region remember that the heart of the still beaver waters will always have a welcome for you."

"Let's cut a path through the swamp," exclaimed Warner, with a burst of inspiration. "We can catch all the fish we can carry in a couple of hours."

"That's a good idea," agreed Norman, with enthusism.

In spite of the hermit's protests, the boys set to work with him, and by dinner time had cut a way well into the swamp. Umber shared with them the generous lunch they had brought along. They resumed their work after dinner; but at two o'clock yielded to the

urgent wishes of the hermit and bade him good-bye. It was evident that their stay was making Umber more and more nervous, and they accepted his statement that with the good start he had got he would have little difficulty in finishing up the work alone. Before they parted with the hermit, however, Norman succeeded, after considerable persuasion, in getting him to accept a gift of thirty dollars, which he felt would go far in providing for his modest needs for several months to come.

They went at once to the brook after leaving the hermit, and, when they returned to the camp that night, carried along with them a mess of beautiful brook trout that proved more than sufficient to meet the demands of the hungry crew that was waiting for them, and whose members welcomed them back with hearty good-fellowship.

CHAPTER XXVI

BACK TO EAST BRANCH WATERS

"Well, we are all through here, boys," announced Eustace to Norman and Fred, soon after supper. "We have completed our work in good shape. The dam is stronger than it ever was before, and I don't believe there will be any further attempt to destroy it. In fact I think we shall have the situation pretty much in our own hands from this out. I have made all arrangements to return to the big crew on the East Branch to-morrow."

"I shall leave Sam Wilkins, Jerry Cox, and three of the other men here on the dam, and take the rest of the crew along with me. They are pretty sure to be needed on the main drive."

"It has been a strenuous five days we've put in here," said Warner.

Eustace gave him a quizzical look.

"You and Norman appear to be no worse for your experiences," he said. "They will be valuable to you. They taught you self-reliance beside giving you something to think about when the long winter comes."

"There will be ten of us in the return party, will there?" asked Norman.

"No, only nine," replied Eustace. "I sent Baslis Mace ahead yesterday to arrange for the carry around Webster stream."

"Well, how are we going to make the return trip in two canoes?"

"We can't," returned Eustace, with a laugh. "We shall have to use three. Jerry Cox has two big ones stored in the old horse hovel. We are to have one of them in addition to the two we brought here. It's plenty large enough to carry four."

The following morning there was a specially early breakfast, and just as the sun was beginning to show over the eastern tree-tops, the company's staunch little tug was making its way down the lake with Eustace and his men who were returning with him to the East Branch waters. Jerry Cox was in his element and took a special delight in showing off the paces of his craft, which, on most of its trips, was doomed to be a burden-hauler with no opportunity to show its speed.

Nine o'clock found the party at the foot of Telos Lake, where they bade good-bye to Jerry Cox. The next hour was spent in carrying their canoes and dunnage around the canal to the head of Webster Lake. At the foot of this, which they reached a little later, they found old man Lajoie waiting with his horses to tote them around the boisterous waters of Webster stream. Before starting out on this part of their journey, however, they stopped to cook and eat a hearty dinner, a fine mess of trout secured by Sol, Barney,

Norman, and Fred adding not a little to the zest of the meal.

It was a little after the noon hour when the party once more resumed their journey in the rear of Uncle Lajoie's tote-team. Norman and Warner, accompanied by Eustace, again improved the opportunity to view the wild and picturesque beauty of Webster stream as its turbulent waters raced wildly amid their rocky barriers, on their long journey to the sea.

It was nearly four o'clock when they dropped their canoes into the waters of the East Branch at the lower end of Indian Carry.

From there on the journey was comparatively easy and at six o'clock they were in camp below the dam at the foot of Grand Lake, greatly to the delight of Jake Wiley, who was thirsting for news from the Chamberlain dam, and who promptly abandoned his tent and took up his abode with them.

It was a glorious summer night. The mosquitoes and black flies that had proved such a pest to them in the early part of the season, were no longer in evidence, and the men of the crew were enabled to enjoy their after-supper pipes in a state of peace.

Perhaps it was this, or possibly the new moon that lit up the night with its pale radiance — at any rate the men were one and all in an unusually reminiscent mood.

"They hed a terrible jam jest below the mouth o' the Sebois," declared Wiley, as he blew big rings of

smoke from his cob pipe. "Hung 'em up the best part of a week. Dud Sweeney went out an' cut it, but he's never come back."

"Killed!" exclaimed Eustace, incredulously.

"That's what," asserted Wiley. "Ye see the jam hauled a little afore they was a-lookin' for it. It came down like a race hoss. Dud was off with the first crack, an' had pretty nigh fetched the shore, when a log upended an' gin him an awful pelt — knocked him clear out into the white water. He ain't ben seen since."

"And they haven't recovered the body yet?" queried Eustace.

"They hadn't the last I hear tell — and thet was day afore yesterday."

"It's too bad — too bad," declared Eustace, with evident feeling. "Dud was a hard worker, and one of the best drivers on the Penobscot. He was a daring fellow, and was always ready to cut the key-log in a jam when there was nobody else that dared to do it. I was looking to see him and Sol and Barney and Tom make about the best quartette of drivers that ever went down the East Branch."

"Shure, an' the pitcher thot goes too often to the well gets broken at last," said O'Connor, soberly. "Arrah, but it's a brave way to go onyhow," he added, in a lighter tone. "I niver happened t' work wid Dud, though I knew he had the riputashun av bein' a crack waterman, an' bedad a man as carries thot name

on the East Branch, takes his loife in his hands a good many toimes to earn it."

"No soldier ever encounters half as many dangers in a campaign," asserted Eustace. "There's scarcely an hour in the day, except the short time he sleeps, when a crack man on the drive isn't playing battledore and shuttlecock with death. The wonder is that so many of them come through alive."

"What has allus amazed me, hes ben to see some of the men a-blowin' off steam in practical jokes after doin' a day's stunt thet would have tired an ox," declared Boggs. "Jest ye think o' boy Barney here doin' the work of about three able-bodied men during the day, an' then playin' Windigo through the night."

"'Tis the small wit o' me that runs away wid me jedgment," said Barney, ruefully. "Ouch, but thot duckin' the byes gave me was a moighty could one!"

"There's one thing about Barney's practical jokes," interposed Eustace. "They are usually about as harmless as such kind of pranks can ever be."

"Sure Oi've never killed any wan yit," asserted Barney.

"No," admitted Eustace, "but you've scared all the growth out of a number of them. I remember one spring on the West Branch with old Bill Lemon for boss when two or three of the boys found a chance to let up a little one day. A jam had formed and Uncle Bill had gone back a ways with one or two of the men to get some dynamite cartridges. We were bunkin'

for the time being in an old lumber camp. There really wasn't much the men could do while he was gone; but nevertheless he wanted them to keep a-moving. Bill always seemed to think that a river driver was another name for perpetual motion, and he always looked hurt when the crew stopped to eat their meals."

"He was the feller thet did the heavy drivin'," commented Boggs.

"You knew him, did you?" asked Eustace.

"Did my first work on the Penobscot under him."

"Well, then you will appreciate the kind of a joke he'd be apt to play."

"I reckon I can," responded Boggs, with a grin.

"Well, he was a-coming back with that dynamite the day I speak of when he spied four of the men a-playing a game of cards in the old oat house. They were so busy that they didn't see him. What did that old knave do but explode one of his cartridges on the outside corner of the oat house! I tell you there was an awful shaking up. Those four men came a-tearing out of the tumbling ruins with their hair on end, and never stopped till they got to the river. Some of the boys thought Bill had gone too far; but there didn't any of them care to take it up with him. I don't recollect that there were any more lapses into social affairs during the rest of that drive."

"What a gang o' hollow eyes old Bill used to show up with at the close of a drive!" exclaimed Boggs. "Gaunt, sunburned, calloused, foot-sore, long-haired

critters, so ragged thet they didn't look fit to be seen by civilized folks. But it didn't take some on 'em very long t' blow in their roll arter they reached Bangor. There was sharkers enough a-waitin' for 'em es long es their money lasted. You knew Sim Davis?" he continued, turning to Eustace.

"I've heard of him. He was the fellow who ducked Parson Cayle, wasn't he?"

"The same feller," replied Boggs. "I wasn't there myself; but an ole feller who was told me all about it. Cayle was a good, clean feller, a little slow-witted, but honest and steady goin'. He didn't drink, nor smoke, nor swear, so the men got to callin' of him Parson, till by an' by nobody remembered what his real name was. The drive started early thet year, an' there was consider'ble ice for a spell in places along the shore. Th' crew got t' Wolf Cove one Sunday morning. Some rascal had toted in a keg o' rum an' most of th' men proceeded t' git drunk. In the midst of their hilarity some one declared es how it was time th' Parson was baptized. With thet they cut a hole through the ice, an' stripped the poor critter an' soused him. It was pretty tough medicine, but Cayle was game an' bore it like a major. They gin him a good rub down, an' greased him in lard, an' hed consider'ble fun with him. Still if they'd been willin' to hev stopped at that pint there probably would no harm hev resulted. But they kep' up their drinkin' an' pretty soon Sim Davis declared thet th' Parson must be baptized agin. He allowed thet

the fust one didn't take. With thet they perceeded to hustle th' Parson to th' hole in the ice agin. It was freshet pitch, an' the current was swirlin' in an' out o' the cove with consider'ble ginger. Jest es they shoved th' Parson under Sim Davis lost his holt on him an' he was swept under the ice an' drowned. They said the yell the poor critter let out o' him was enough to make yer blood run cold. It sobered thet gang all right. They got together and agreed to say thet the Parson was drowned a-breakin' of a jam. Thet was th' story thet went in the settlements for a number of years. It wasn't till arter Sim Davis's death thet th' true facts leaked out. When Sim came back on the drive the next spring his hair was white es snow. No one could get him to tech a drop o' liquor. When the drive got nigh t' Wolf Cove he crossed the river an' made a wide circle through th' woods t' avoid seein' th' place. The crew found him a-waitin' for 'em three miles below thar. He allus did thet every spring. Wasn't money enough in Maine to hev tempted 'im to go a-nigh thet place agin. When he come t' die they found he'd willed what little he hed to th' Parson's mother. Thet was th' fust time she suspected where the money she'd been a-gittin' every year, long 'bout midsummer, hed come from. I don't think Sim ever hed a minute's peace arter th' Parson's death."

"Any man's a fool who lets liquor steal away his judgment and his brains," asserted Eustace. "It's a good deal better to let the stuff alone."

"Bedad, thot's th' truth," agreed Barney O'Connor. "'Twas last spring Oi'd ben tippin' me elbow wid a few av the byes, an' th' nixt day I cut the kay-log in a jam at Nickerson's ledges; Oi was thot unsteady I missed me footin' when she hauled an' was caught in th' rush. Bedad, I thought me toime hod come. It was sober enough I was thin. I made a vow thot if I got out av th' scrape aloive it's no more Oi'd meddle wid th' cups. Thin all me sinses lift me. 'Twas loike a drame wid all th' white wathers a-shoutin' in me ears, 'Too late! too late!' Whin I come to mesilf I was a-layin' on the bank wid the byes a-workin' over me. I learned thin thot wan o' the min had reached out from the bushes an' pulled me ashore from an eddy where I had bin thrown. I knew thin that God had heard me vow an' spared me loife. Since thin Oi hov bin square wid Him, an' kept me pledge."

"The fact that you have done so was what led the Company to make you assistant foreman this spring," declared Eustace.

"I ban come prattee close for be keeled wan tam mase'f," declared Baslis Mace. "We ban runnin' Tiger Ledges on de Wes' Branch, in wan grat beeg batteau. Dere ban four. Beeg Marcel Fecteau — he seet on stern — Luger Ronco an' Belone Joler, com' een middel. I was ban in bow. Ba cripe! dat ban prattee small crew for ronne dem ledges; but we was t'ink we ban smart fellaire. We don' know so much den w'at we deed nex' day. Ba Joe! we go down dem rapide lak wan

streak tonderre an' lightnin'. It mak' de win' blow heemse'f on our faces. Our hair stan' oop straight. I nevaire before was gone me so swif'. Firs' t'ing I know dere was ban bomp on boulder w'at stan' een dat w'ite watterre, 'bout middel dem banks. I hear dem plank cra-ack. I t'ink dat bottom was gone for sure. I jomp me rat out on ledge. Belone Joler tak' ma plac' een bow. Ba Joe! dat batteau was gone before I was foun' me tam for t'ink."

"Got through safe, did she?" asked Boggs.

"Ye-as — eet ban wan meericle."

"It's allus safest in a place like thet t' stick by th' wood," declared Wiley. "Ye at least hev th' satisfaction of hevin' suthin' t' float ye."

"Bagosh, I t'ink dat ban so," acquiesced Baslis. "Dem odder fellaire ban com' out all rat', but I ban lef' out on top dat ledge, so sleepery I t'ink I can't stay on. De win' blow de beeg spray on ma face. Ma head, roun' roun' she go! I can't seet down. De watterre lap, lap roun' ma spike-sole shoe lik' he say 'Com', com' wit' me. I ban put yo' to sleep!' But ba golly! I t'ink what ma ole modder do — I t'ink w'at Lilla Marquis do who was promise for be ma famme! I shut ma face. I say 'No, no, I hang me on tight. I kep ma head. I will do ma best for com' me on top dat scrape.'"

"It was certainly pretty close quarters for you," said Eustace.

"I t'ink ma tam was com'," continued Baslis, "but

de Bon Dieu was not desert me. Prattee soon beeg log sweeng 'cross current. It hol' wan end on ledge w'ere I was an' nodder wan on shore. De watterre was ronne swif' over eet, but I was not care. I make wan queeck ronne. I jomp on shore. I dance an' seeng, an' cry me on ma eye. I tole you it ban gran' good t'ing for be alive."

JUST BELOW CHESUNCOOK LAKE, PENOBSCOT RIVER. — *Page 328.*

CHAPTER XXVII

JAKE WILEY AND THE BEAR

"A man can easily face dangers with a lot of other fellers 'round him," remarked Jake Wiley, "but it's a diff'rent matter when he's all alone. Say, did any of you boys ever know what it was to be really lonesome — to feel es if ye couldn't touch elbows with any of yer kind? If ye hev'n't, ye'd better come up here an' tend dam a spell. I swan, I've felt some nights es if I was nothin' but a midge in the tall hair o' creation. Thar's been times when I'd gladly gin half o' my season's pay for some one t' talk to — an' I reckon ye all know I was never a very mouthy feller et thet. Th' big woods an' the swash o' waters along th' shores hev a mournful language all their own for a lonesome man, an' sooner or later it's pretty sartin t' git on his nerves. Talk erbout the screech of a crosscut saw, or the rasp of a rat-tail file! Take my word for it, they ain't in it for a single jiffy with the voices of the wild when a feller's all alone with 'em. Tell ye what, thar's nothin' quite like 'em t' make yer back hair stan' up, an' put yer teeth on edge."

Wiley paused, and puffed vigorously at his pipe, which had nearly gone out.

"I hed a little experience t'other day," he resumed, when he had it well going again, "thet convinced me thet it wasn't wise for a man t' be all alone. I was a-comin' out t' th' dam one mornin', when, right in th' middle o' th' path, I come plump onto a bear cub — th' cutest little critter ye ever saw. I looked all round for th' old mother, but she wasn't in sight; looked for all th' world 's if the little rascal hed run away from home, an' got lost. I concluded es how it would do no harm to shet th' little feller up for a spell in the tool hovel at th' end o' th' dam, an' see what come of it. I didn't hev any great trouble a-catchin' of him, though I'll allow th' little imp was consider'ble spryer than I s'posed he'd be. I hadn't more'n got him tucked comf'tably under my arm, however, afore I heard a rumpus behind me, an' turned my head jest in time t' see thet ole bear comin' lickity-larrup out o' th' woods. I tell ye, she was arter me, hot-foot. I didn't lose no time a-droppin' o' thet cub, an' th' way I skedaddled for th' dam was a caution t' owls! I s'posed she'd stop when she got t' her cub; but, by hokey, she didn't! She kept right on, an' I see it was me for th' tall timber. I made for th' dam, only stoppin' long enough t' snatch up a pick-pole thet lay on th' shore. I tell ye I did some tall sprintin' across th' top o' th' dam to th' gate-post by th' sluiceway, an' climbed t' the top of it pretty lively with th' aid o' some spikes I'd driven into it. I never s'posed thet bear would 'a' chased me onto th' dam; but, by ginger! thet's jest what she done, an' more'n

thet, she was a-makin' surprisin' good time. I knew it wouldn't be much of a trick for her t' climb my post, an' I s'picioned thet pickpole wouldn't amount t' much es a weapon o' defence. I'd gladly gin a year's pay, 'bout thet time, fer a good flyin' machine — but thar wasn't any t' be hed. Th' gate was open, an' thar was a good head o' water runnin' through th' sluiceway. It was consider'ble of a jump across; but with thet bear right et hand, I was willin' t' take long chances. I jest planted th' nose o' thet pickpole on th' bottom o' th' sluiceway an' vaulted across — landed plump on top o' thet opposite gate-post, though I can't tell t' this day exactly how I done it. One thing is sartin sure; money wouldn't 'a' tempted me t' tried it agin."

"Reckon thet saved ye," commented Boggs.

"Thet's jest what it did," acquiesced Wiley. "When thet bear got t' the sluiceway she stopped mighty sudden. Then she looked across et me, 'n' growled, an' showed her teeth, es much es t' say: 'Oh, wouldn't I jest like t' eat ye!' 'Bout thet time another cub come a-whinin' out o' th' woods, an' she went back t' the shore. I thought I'd seen th' last of her; I climbed down from my perch an' made my way t' the other shore, a-hopin' she'd clear out an' leave me — which she finally did, 'long 'bout noon, arter she'd raided th' stuff in my cook-tent. When I come t' consider th' matter o' gittin' back, I see thet I wouldn't ever do it by a pole vault. A feller will sometimes do things in th' enthusiasm o' th' moment thet he can't ever do agin.

I wandered up th' shore a piece, where th' water was still, an' managed t' find an old log. It wasn't jest what I'd 'a' selected if I'd hed a choice; but it was th' best I could do, an' I managed t' pole my way across t' th other shore on it. I didn't lose no time a-gittin' my hands on my Winchester. I've kept it nigh me ever since, in hopes I'd git another look et thet bear. I should enjoy a-pumpin' her full o' lead; but th' ole hussey hesn't showed up since. Arter all," concluded Wiley, as he knocked the ashes from his pipe, " I rather guess I ought t' be satisfied with bein' alive."

" I reckon ye hed," was the comment of Tom Boggs, as the party turned in for the night.

Early the next morning the journey down the East Branch was resumed. At Stair Falls their canoes and dunnage were toted around Forty-rod Carry, the men stopping for a short time to enjoy a drink from the cool spring near its foot. Following this, the canoes were launched again, and the members of the party glided along over quiet waters that flowed through meadow-lands to the head of Haskell Rock Pitch, about two miles below. Here another carry of about three-quarters of a mile was resorted to, after which the canoes were run to the head of Pond Pitch, the first of the series of rapids, which, together, were known as the Grand Falls of the East Branch.

Then followed a carry of four miles, during which the boys, in company with Eustace, had an opportunity to enjoy at more leisure the grand scenic beauties of

this picturesque stretch of river, with its wild and sombre background of forest.

"Did any man ever ride a log through there?" asked Norman, as they gazed in wonder on the yeasty current making its noisy way over a sharply descending river-bed, thick set with jagged rocks.

"I never saw one," responded Eustace, "although I have heard stories about the feat having been accomplished by daring drivers — most of which I am free to say that I took with a grain of salt. Sol Soc declares that he personally saw a man named Smithers perform the feat, and he isn't much given to drawing the long bow. You may perhaps have seen the description of one such exploit in Holman F. Day's poem, 'The Knight of the Spike-Sole Boots.' It runs like this:

'Out of the spume and fogs,
A chap drove through — one o' Connor's crew —
Riding two hemlock logs.
He was holding his pickpole couched at death,
As though it were lance in rest,
And his spike-sole boots, as firm as roots,
In the splintered bark were pressed.
If this be sacrilege, pardon me, pray;
But a robe, such as angels wear,
Seemed his old red shirt with its smears of dirt,
And a halo his mop of hair;
And never a knight in a tournament
Rode lists with a jauntier mien
Than he of the drive, who came alive
Through the hell of the "Hulling Machine".'"

"That certainly carries the spray of the white

water," commented Norman, when Eustace finished his quotation. "It has the genuine atmosphere."

"The story," explained Eustace, "is that he made that hair-lifting run to rescue a sportsman — a foolhardy tenderfoot who had been wrecked in trying to go through the 'Hulling Machine' in his canoe, and who was clinging for life to a projecting ledge in the boiling current, in momentary danger of being swept away. The men of the crews are always ready to take long chances to save life."

Below Bowlin Pitch the members of the party paused for a leisurely dinner, Sol Soc once more contributing an "appetizer" in the shape of a fine string of trout. Following this, the canoes were again put afloat, and the party paddled their way over comparatively smooth water to a beautiful camping spot at a place called Monument Line, about three miles above the junction of the Sebois River and the East Branch. Here a tent which Eustace had secured from Jake Wiley was pitched, and preparations were made to spend the night. The afternoon was well spent, and Eustace declared that he wanted daylight for finding Steve Merrill and his men. The men were tired with the long journey and the carries they had made, and, shortly after supper, turned in for the night.

At daybreak the following morning the members of the party were once more on their way down the river, and, about the middle of the forenoon, overtook the rear drive at the East Branch ferry, just above the

Wissataquoik stream. This ferry was a crude affair, consisting of a cable stretched across the river, upon which a big flat-boat was worked back and forth by means of a running pulley. As the logs in the river made the further use of the canoes impracticable, they were stored at a sporting-camp which did business at the ferry, and the dunnage was loaded onto a batteau which followed the drive.

Eustace and his men were given a most hearty welcome from the men of the rear drive, who paused long enough in their work to get a hasty account of the operations at Chamberlain dam.

Continuing their journey on foot, they came up with the main drive a few miles further down the river. The first man to greet them was Felix Lamarre, who, with his wangan established at the edge of a meadow, was busily at work preparing the noon lunches for the hungry men of the crew.

"Ba Joe! How glad I was ban for see yo'," he cried, joyfully, as he shook hands with Eustace and the boys. "I was scare 'mos' deat' for t'ink I nevaire ban see yo' som' oder tam."

"Oh, you couldn't get rid of us so easily, Felix," responded Norman, lightly, more touched than he would have cared to admit by the evident warmth and sincerity of the cook's greeting. "Still, I don't mind telling you that it's mighty pleasant for us to know that we've been missed."

"Wal, I gass yo' ban miss!" declared Felix. "I

was ban so lonesome I was t'ink som'tam I was ban die. I t'ink I could eat som't'ing now."

"I hope you haven't lost your appetite on our account, old man," said Warner. "I reckon you've had a full better cookee than I was."

"He ban firs'-rat' fellaire — wit' peekpole," declared Felix, deprecatingly. "I t'ink he better go back on top dat driv' in de mornin'."

"Bound to put me right back into the harness, I see," said Fred, with a laugh. "Well, I think I can show you I have not forgotten how to draw the load."

"How are you, old man? Glad to see you back!" exclaimed a strong, deep voice at that moment; and, turning, the boys found Steve Merrill in the act of shaking hands with Eustace. "I begin to think you have been my mascot," he said. "You hadn't been off your job two hours before the logs began to act as if the Old Harry was in 'em. Ricked an' jackstrawed an' cob-piled on every blessed thing that could give them a lodging. To make matters worse, Jim Benner played out on me, and I had to send him back to Larry Hunt's. When he gets better, he's going to stay and do chores there. I had to get in and take charge myself, with Skinner for an assistant."

"Where's Jud now?" asked Eustace.

"He's working ahead of the drive now."

"I'll bet you made things move after you took hold," said Eustace.

Merrill indulged a rueful laugh.

"I should have done so, but I didn't," he confessed. "Everything seemed to work against us. We had the worst jam of all before we got out of the Sebois. When we finally got into the East Branch I began to think my troubles were over; but blessed if we didn't get another jam the very next day, and that, too, where there was mighty little excuse for it. You heard about Dud Sweeney?"

"Yes," replied Eustace; "Jake Wiley told me about him at Grand Lake."

Merrill was silent for a moment.

"I have at least one satisfaction," he said presently, in a choked voice. "I didn't order him to do it; he volunteered."

"Did he leave any family?"

"No, he was a single man."

"Well, it might have been worse," declared Eustace. "It's bad enough to lose a good man on the drive without having to think that a wife and little ones are going hungry because of it."

"It would be almost unbearable," responded Merrill. "It always breaks me all up to lose a man. I haven't been good for very much since Dud went under."

For a moment neither of them spoke. Presently Merrill roused himself, with a sigh.

"How did you make it at Chamberlain?" he asked.

"First-rate. We repaired the dam and left it stronger than it was before."

In a few words Eustace related the experiences that

had befallen him and his men since they left the Sebois. Merrill followed the narrative without comment, although it was evident that he was deeply interested in it.

"Well, boys, how did it seem to be prisoners?" he asked, with a smile, at its conclusion.

"Well, our experiences might have been worse," responded Norman.

"It seems to me that you got out of the scrape in mighty good shape," said Merrill, approvingly. "I reckon Gusty Peters must have thought he'd picked up a couple of Tartars; but what shall we do with Eustace?" he added, with a quizzical look at the Sebois boss.

Norman looked mystified.

"What is the charge?" he asked.

"Aiding and abetting prisoners in making their escape," responded Merrill.

Eustace looked at the boys, with dancing eyes.

"You might as well confess that you suspected me," he said. "You haven't said so in words; but I've seen the interrogation-mark in your looks."

"If you did it, you had good reasons for it," declared Norman, stoutly.

"That's the stuff!" exclaimed Merrill, well pleased. "I'll wager he did."

"Here are some documents that may throw a little light on that point," said Eustace, handing Merrill the package of letters he had taken from Gusty Peters.

Merrill took the letters and walked away to the shore with them, where he seated himself on an old log, and read them slowly and carefully.

"You have done the company a very great service, Billy," he announced to Eustace, when he returned to the camp, a little later. "You have not only put the dam in first-class condition, but you have furnished us a pretty good guarantee that it won't be molested again. I regard these letters as of such importance that I sha'n't rest easy until they are in the safe of the company's attorney, at Bangor. I reckon I'll leave you in charge of the drive, and take them down to him to-morrow. Things are moving along nicely now; and, with such a lucky fellow as you in charge, I don't imagine we shall experience much more trouble in getting into the boom at Grindstone. With the additional men we have now, we can string 'em ahead wherever there seems any chance of a jam forming."

"It's a good deal easier to prevent a jam than to break one," declared Eustace.

"Just my idea," agreed Merrill.

"You're giving me a pretty big stunt," said Eustace. "I hope you don't expect me to fill your shoes."

"I reckon they wouldn't be big enough for you, Billy," returned Merrill, lightly. "If you take my place another year, I sha'n't blame the company."

"You'll never get the chance," declared Eustace, with emphasis. "They'll never catch me in this country unless you are here to steer things."

A little later, the lunches having been sent out to the men, the party at the camp was treated to a hearty dinner, cooked in the best style of Felix Lamarre. At its close Eustace and Merrill started out at once on their tour of inspection. As they were leaving, Merrill turned to Norman and Fred.

"I don't see where I can start you in to advantage this afternoon," he said. "You deserve a little recognition for your services to the company. You may take the time off, and go fishing. There's a small brook that empties into the East Branch a little way below here, where you ought to do a good business."

RIPOGENUS FALLS, PENOBSCOT RIVER. — *Page 340.*

CHAPTER XXVIII

A FOREST CERBERUS

"This is something of a novelty," declared Fred Warner, as he and Norman made their way along the river-bank a little later. "It isn't often that any one gets time off on the drive."

"That's all the more reason why we should make the most of it," responded Norman.

"We can't expect to get trout enough for the whole crew," declared Warner. "That would be more than we could lug."

It was a beautiful summer day; and, as they walked along, the boys could not refrain from admiring the wild flowers that grew along the river-banks, filling the air with their pervading fragrance. In a short time they reached the brook Merrill had spoken of, and which made its way, in a narrow but fairly deep channel, through a fringe of alders, to mingle its waters with those of the East Branch. The boys found a well-trodden shore at its mouth, and a well-defined path leading back into the woods, which gave evidence of frequent use. The banks grew steeper as they made their way further back into the woods; but the channel was unobstructed.

"Looks as if this brook had been used for driving," remarked Warner, as they were trimming up two long, limber alders which they had cut for fish-poles.

"What makes you think so?" asked Norman, pausing in his work to look again at the brook.

"Do you see those boulders piled along the banks?" asked Warner.

"Yes."

"Well, those came from the bed of the brook."

"I believe you're right, Fred," declared Norman, as he finished his inspection. "Those rocks are piled altogether too regularly to be the work of Nature."

"They were put there by human hands," asserted Warner, confidently. "If they were not, there'd be more of them in the bed of the brook than on its banks. As it is, you can see for yourself that the channel is perfectly clear of all obstructions. Just ahead you can see where it was straightened out. Notice the old bed there, strewn with rocks?"

"You're right, Fred," declared Norman, after another inspection. "That's just what was done."

"I imagine that the logs which were run out from here came in single file," resumed Warner; "but, unless this runs back some distance, I should have thought it would have been cheaper to have landed them upon the East Branch in the first place."

"So should I," agreed Norman; "but let's see if these changes have had any effect upon the trout. Just hand me that can of worms, please."

Warner passed his companion a mustard-can, the cover of which was punched full of holes.

Norman selected a worm from it, and carefully baited his hook.

"Looks as if there ought to be something under that bank," he said. "The spume seems to have settled there, and I've often had my best luck in such places."

"Trout like the shade in summer," said Fred.

Norman made no response. He stole very quickly to the bank, and dropped his hook into the water through the center of the foam patch. There was an almost immediate tug at his line, and a moment later a half-pound trout lay gasping upon the bank.

"Good for you, old boy!" cried Warner, admiringly. "Now see me catch the mate to him."

But, although both boys fished assiduously, they did not, for some time, secure another bite.

"Looks as if it had been fished to death," declared Norman, in disgust.

"That's what it does," agreed Fred.

"Do you suppose some of our men have tried it out?"

"I don't see how they could have," declared Warner, incredulously. "They have been kept on the jump with their work from dawn to dusk, and I don't imagine that trout fishing is very brisk after dark — at least, I never found it so."

"Well, this brook has certainly been fished, and fished hard," declared Norman, with conviction. "Just

look at those tracks," he added, pointing to a sand bar near the shore, which was fairly covered with foot-prints.

"None of our men made those," said Warner, after a moment's critical examination of them.

"What makes you think so?" demanded Norman.

"There are no calk-marks," declared Fred, a little impatiently. "Just look at them. There are moccasins, boots, and lumbermen's rubbers there, but no trace of a spike-soled shoe."

"Perhaps they were made by people from the sporting-camp," suggested Norman.

"I don't think so," said Warner. "People who come up into this country at this season of the year to fish are usually after the lakes; although quite often they make a trip up the Wissataquoik stream. The fishing there is said to be very good indeed. Besides, it is a favorite route to the North Spur of Mount Katahdin."

"Do you know, Fred," exclaimed Norman, his face aglow with a new purpose, "I intend to come here sometime when I haven't anything else to do, and cruise this whole country. I intend also to have you with me."

"Thank you," said Warner, with evident gratification. "It's very good of you to say that; but what should I be — guide or cook?"

"You'd have to be a little of both," returned Norman. "I haven't picked up your knack of woodcraft

yet; but I fancy I could help you out with the cooking. I could at least be your cookee; but what I should really want you for, old boy, would be my chum."

There were tears in Warner's eyes.

"I shall always remember that you said that," he replied; "but I shall never be able to be a 'sport.' I have my living to earn, beside helping mother and the children."

"Nevertheless, I feel it in my bones, that some day you and I will make just such a trip together," insisted Norman.

"Ah! There's some quick water," exclaimed Warner.

Both boys stopped to listen. There was no doubt about it. Through the screen of forest trees came the sound of falling water.

With eager steps they made their way forward, and presently entered a narrow glen between two hills. A short distance up this natural watercourse they found their way blocked by a log dam, which extended across the glen and held back the waters of the brook in a fair-sized pond, upon whose shore was a rough board structure with a protruding smokestack.

"A portable sawmill!" exclaimed Warner, in surprise.

"Where do you suppose they can find a market for lumber here?" asked Norman.

"Oh, among the sporting and lumber-camps. You see, it would save them all a long tote to get it here," explained Warner.

"Looks as if they'd been twitching logs from the brook," said Norman, pointing to a smoothly worn road that extended around the end of the dam nearest the mill.

"That's just what they've been doing," declared Warner, in a tone of bewilderment; "and it looks as if they had been doing it very recently; but I haven't seen a log in the brook, and I don't recall that we have passed any cuttings. Let's investigate a little."

Acting upon this suggestion, the boys crossed the brook on a log that spanned it just below the dam and evidently served as a foot-bridge. They climbed slowly up the smooth grubbed road, that led around the corner of the dam, and stood looking at the mill. It was a small affair of the portable variety; and it was evident that all the logs which it used were dragged in by horses; as there was no slip extending into the pond, although a well-worn road showed where logs had been twitched from its waters.

The boys were about to enter the mill, when a man slouched around the farther corner of it and confronted them with a scowling face. He was a short, thick-set fellow, with a heavy shock of black hair and a six weeks' growth of stubby beard. His eyes were small and round, and his features large and coarse. A protruding upper jaw gave a wolfish look to his countenance, while a large ruby nose proclaimed him a hard drinker. It was evident that he was in anything but a pleasant frame of mind.

"What d'ye want here?" he growled, in a menacing tone.

"Nothing," returned Warner.

"We're on a little fishing trip," explained Norman.

"Oh, ye are, hey?" responded the newcomer, in a sneering voice. "You fellers from the sporting-camp seem t' think ye own this whole country round here; but ye don't. Understan' me? Ye don't," he added, with rising inflection.

"We never pretended to," declared Norman, warmly.

"Ye don't, hey? Wal, ye're sartinly very condescendin' t' stoop so low an' be so humble. What right hev ye to be fishin' here anyway? Didn't ye know this was private property — an' ye hev'n't any right t' fish on it?"

"I know it's wild land, and that the fish and game on it belong to the State," returned Warner, with spirit. "We have a perfect right to hunt or fish on it."

"Oh, ye hev, hey? Wal, the both on ye'll git out o' here right lively, if ye want to git away with whole hides. Skedaddle with ye!"

"What right have you to order us off?" demanded Norman, hotly.

"Don't ye give me any back talk. I won't stan' for it. I hev a perfect right t' order ye off, bein' as I happen t' own this land."

The man spoke in a high-pitched, snarling voice. It was evident that, for some unexplained reason, he found the presence of Norman and Fred very irritating.

"Come, git out with ye!" he added, sharply.

"What harm have we done here?" demanded Norman.

"This is no lyceum," was the crabbed response. "I'm not holding any argyments with ye. I told ye to git, and if ye don't do it, I'll warm yer jacket for ye."

"And it would be the most expensive job you ever tackled," retorted Norman, white with passion.

"Come on, old boy; let's go back to the sporting-camp, and leave this genial gentleman alone in full possession of his mill and his land," said Warner, taking Norman by the arm. "Don't get hot. He isn't worth the powder."

"When I want ye, I'll send for ye," growled the mill-owner; "but if I ever ketch ye a-prowlin' round here agin I'll make ye smart for it, or my name ain't Jabe Crowley."

"You needn't threaten us," said Norman, as he started to follow Warner down the roadway to the log foot-bridge below the dam. "We're not afraid of you."

"Oh, ye hain't, hey?" returned Crowley, in a sneering tone.

"That's what I said," declared Norman.

"Well, I don't care a tinker what ye say, so long as ye git out and stay out."

"Come on. Don't talk to him," pleaded Warner.

Thus admonished, Norman restrained himself with an effort, and followed Fred across the brook.

They had gone but a short distance down the pathway that led to the East Branch, when they perceived that Crowley was following them on the opposite bank. His presence there stirred Norman up anew.

"Oh, you want that trout, do you?" he shouted. "Well, take it!" and, snatching it from the willow stringer on which he was carrying it, he hurled it with all his strength across the brook. It struck the astonished Crowley full in the face, and fell at his feet.

For a moment the mill-owner looked dazed. Then, with loud, angry curses, he started in rapid pursuit of the boys.

"I'll — I'll skin ye alive for thet!" he roared, in a frenzy of passion.

He came down over the bank at a surprising pace for a short-legged man; and it would probably have been an unhappy experience for the boys, had he succeeded in overtaking them. Fortune, however, favored them. As he raced wildly down the incline in his blind rage, Crowley stubbed his foot on a projecting root, and fell headforemost, with a mighty splash, into the waters of the brook.

"Run!" shouted Warner, and he and Norman raced down the wood-path at a rate of speed the mill-owner would never have been able to equal in his palmiest days. It was not until they had reached the East Branch and were well on their way back to camp, that they stopped to take breath and discuss their astounding experience.

"Phew! but wasn't he the limit?" gasped Warner, as he threw himself down on a big ledge that projected from the shore.

"Never saw anything like him," panted Norman.

Warner drew a big bandanna handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped his face.

"Mighty hot day for a foot-race," he said, with a glance at his perspiring companion.

"One is enough for a summer," agreed Norman, as he followed Warner's example. "Do they raise many like him round here?"

"He's the first one I ever saw, and I hope he may be the last," replied Fred. "Men in the big woods are proverbially hospitable, but this one is certainly an exception to the rule."

"A regular forest Cerberus," agreed Norman.

"He evidently thought we were stopping at the sporting-camp," continued Warner. "He would never dream of seeing members of a driving-crew on a fishing trip."

"I noticed that you did what you could to confirm him in that view," said Norman.

"Yes. I thought it would be well to throw him off the scent. It was very evident that he did not want us to see what he was doing, which leads me to suspect that it was something that wouldn't stand investigation."

"Just my idea exactly," coincided Norman; "but I can't for the life of me imagine what it is. Wouldn't

I just like to go back with Sol Soc and Barney O'Connor and interview that fellow again!"

"You may get a chance to," responded Warner, with a smile.

"What makes you think that?"

"I'm inclined to think that Merrill and Eustace will want him looked up a little, when we tell them what we've seen and heard."

"You don't really think he's been raiding our drive, do you?" demanded Norman, with a burst of comprehension.

"That's exactly what I think he's been doing," asserted Warner. "I am very sure he worked last night, and I think he intends to work to-night."

"If he's in that business, I should think he'd be a little more diplomatic with strangers," declared Norman, dubiously.

"He probably would have been if he hadn't mistaken us for a couple of boys from the sporting-camp," said Fred.

"But surely he must have sawed some logs of his own," insisted Norman.

"He probably has, a good many of them," agreed Warner. "He's simply got around now to extend his cut a little at the expense of the company."

Upon their arrival at the camp, the boys found Eustace, who had just returned from his tour of inspection, and promptly related to him their experiences of the afternoon.

"I shall have to think this matter over a little, boys," he said, at the conclusion of their story. Norman was inclined to feel a little hurt at this cool and nonchalant way of receiving the information they had brought to camp, and to think that Eustace attached altogether too little importance to it. He was reassured a little later, however, when Eustace asked him and Warner to tell their experiences of the afternoon to Steve Merrill, who had returned to the camp.

It was very evident that what the boys had to say made a deep impression upon the East Branch boss.

"The skunk!" he exclaimed, when the boys had finished their story. "Did you ever hear of such nerve, Billy?"

"I never did," confessed Eustace; "but you must concede, Steve, that the place is mighty well fitted for that sort of thing."

"Of course it is," admitted Merrill; "but who'd ever look for anything of that kind? I never heard of anything like it. I shouldn't imagine that they could pick up enough in a night to pay them for their knavery."

"The boys say that their mill is a small one; and a couple of men with pickpoles and men to work the brook could pick out quite a bunch of logs in a night."

"That's true," admitted Merrill. "We must button this matter up to-night, Billy," he added, briskly. "I don't know how many men they are working, but we must have force enough to bag the lot. You pick a dozen men, and get in behind the mill. You had better

circle the woods, to avoid attention. I'll take as many more, and work up the brook. I suppose you'd like to be in at the finish, boys?"

"We certainly should," confessed Norman, eagerly.

"All right. Go along with Eustace. You've certainly done the company another good turn to-day."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE NIGHT RAID ON CROWLEY'S CAMP

"Easy there, boys! You're making altogether too much noise. There's plenty of time to go quietly. If we succeed to-night we must take them by surprise. I'll be perfectly satisfied if the rest of you will be as still as Sol."

Eustace gave this word of warning to the men of his crew who had been selected for the raid on Jabe Crowley, and who, impatient for the fray, were making their way through the woods at a rate of speed that was scarcely suitable for a still hunt.

The note of caution had the desired effect, and the men followed after Sol Soc at a more moderate gait. The Indian, realizing that his companions were not his equals in woodcraft, slackened his pace and proceeded in a more leisurely manner, making it easier for the others to keep up with him.

"Begorra, it's not our steps in the bushes they'll be afther hearin', wid a rotary saw a-tearin' up logs, an' a team a-twitchin' av 'em out av the wather," grumbled Barney O'Connor.

"I hope you're right, Barney," said Eustace; "but I'm not sure that they are sawing nights. If they are,

it will make our task a comparatively easy one. In any event, it will be wise for us to take all possible precautions."

"Thet's right," declared Tom Boggs. "Let's see — what was the signal Merrill's men were to give when they closed 'em in?"

"Two hoots of an owl," responded Eustace.

"You don't want to forget our password. It would be tough lines if you were to mistake one of our boys for a member of Jabe Crowley's gang," cautioned Warner.

"Oh, I've got that all right," replied Boggs, good-naturedly. "'Trout' 's the word."

"Eustace says it's 'mum' until we get to doing business 'round the mill," said Norman.

For a time the men made their way through the woods in silence, the crescent moon barely affording them light enough to discern the dim outlines of Sol Soc, as he picked his course through the forest with the unerring instinct of his race.

Presently, they heard ahead the shriek of a rotary saw, as it tore its remorseless way through the logs that were fed to it.

A little later they were gathered about Eustace in the woods, a short distance from the shore opposite the mill, while he carefully assigned each man to his place. Across the little pond the mill was ablaze with light.

"They are up to date," declared Warner. "They have a little dynamo, and light with electricity."

"But those are lanterns," said Norman, as he pointed to moving lights that came and went on the road below the dam.

"Yes. They are using them with their teams," replied Fred.

A few minutes later Sol Soc, who had been reconnoitering, returned with the information that there was a log across the brook a little further up, which would serve the party as a bridge. Soon after this, the men of the crew had quietly taken their stations; and nothing, save the sound of the mill and the clank of chains as the big logs were dragged from the brook below the dam to the end of the mill, broke the silence of the night. These sounds, however, seemed especially loud and insistent to the waiting men stationed about the little clearing, who were eager to close in and, as Tom Boggs had remarked, "make things interestin' for Crowley and his gang."

"They're using two pair of horses," whispered Norman — a precaution that was quite unnecessary, since the rasping plaint of the saw would have rendered his voice inaudible to the men in the clearing.

"That's what I thought," agreed Fred. "One is loading on the bank of the brook while the other is delivering its load at the mill."

For a time both boys were silent. The long delay was becoming irksome, when suddenly, above the noises of the clearing, came two hoarse hoots of an owl. There was a rush of feet from the woods about the

clearing, and an exultant yell from the men of the drive, as they closed in upon Crowley and his followers.

Norman and Fred were making their way toward the mill, when a man dashed toward them in the dark. With a quick dive, Warner seized upon him about the legs, and threw him upon the ground, where Norman promptly grappled with him.

"Let me go!" panted a high-pitched, snarling voice, wild with fear and passion.

With a thrill of triumph the boys recognized him as Jabe Crowley. The big prize of the raid was in their hands; but it was evident that he would not be captured easily. He struggled furiously, squirming, twisting, and striking out wildly in his blind rage. Norman and Fred were strong boys of their ages; but it was evident that they had their hands full in their attempt to subdue Crowley. Once he brushed them both off, and half rose to his feet; but, with a combined and special effort, the boys stretched him out upon the ground again. Here he promptly renewed the struggle; but it was soon over. A newcomer pushed his way between the boys, and a strong hand closed upon Crowley's throat.

"Who've ye got here?" demanded a deep voice — it was Steve Merrill who spoke.

"Jabe Crowley," gasped Norman.

"Good for you!" exclaimed the boss, with satisfaction. "I was afraid the critter'd got away."

Another form came out of the darkness.

"Sol Soc!" cried Norman and Fred, in duet.

"Tie up this man," ordered Merrill, who was still sitting astride the prostrate log-thief. "I reckon the fight is about all out of him."

In a short time Crowley was securely bound, and carried to the mill where the jubilant men of the driving crew had herded a sorry-looking lot of prisoners.

"A good night's work, Billy," asserted Merrill, as he shook Eustace heartily by the hand. "You seem to have landed about everything you went after."

"We were very fortunate," replied Eustace. "You see, the noise of the mill enabled us to get right onto them before they had a suspicion of our presence. The boys made quick work of them."

"I wasn't quite so lucky," said Merrill. "We nabbed the two fellows who were pickpoling our logs out of the river, and got three more along the brook; but there were three, and I'm not sure but four, who made off into the woods, and got away from us."

"Begorra, it's safe to say they'll not sthop runnin' this soide av the Canada line!" interposed Barney O'Connor.

"No; I wasn't reckoning on seeing much more of them," said Merrill, dryly.

"What are we going to do with these men?" asked Eustace.

"We'll take 'em back to camp to-night," returned Merrill. "I shall take Crowley through to Bangor with me to-morrow. I'm not quite sure yet just what I shall do with the others."

"Bedad, Oi rickin the quick way out av it will be t' lynch the whole bunch av thim," said Barney.

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! We ban hire for do dis. Don' yo' go for keel us!" exclaimed one of the prisoners, in tremulous tones.

"Shut up! Close yo' face!" growled his companions.

"Yo' beeg, beeg fool! You make us for be tire. Don' yo' know he ban mak' fonne wit' you?" explained one of them, in a tone of disgust.

The frightened prisoner subsided, looking decidedly chagrined.

"Back to the camp, boys. Lead the way, Sol," ordered Merrill.

The party started promptly upon the return trip, Sol Soc and several of the other men carrying lighted lanterns which had been captured in the raid. It was nearly midnight when the crew, who were disposed to sit up and discuss their respective parts in the capture of Crowley and his gang, turned in for the night.

The next morning Merrill had reached a decision on the question of what to do with the prisoners.

"I've thought it all over, Billy," he announced, "and I've come to the conclusion to take the signed statements of all of them except Crowley, and let them go. Of course I shall take their post-office addresses."

"But perhaps they'll not give you the correct ones," suggested Eustace.

"I've thought of that," said Merrill; "but I have an

idea that if I give them an opportunity to escape jail, they'll deal pretty squarely with me in other respects."

"It should certainly be an inducement for them to do so," replied Eustace, in a dubious tone; "but what are you going to do with Crowley?"

"I'm going to take him to Bangor with me, and let him interview the company's lawyer. I reckon he'll be fairly supple when he gets through with him."

"But perhaps he'll refuse to go without a warrant."

"No, he won't. He's weakened mightily since last night. He has already admitted to me that he is lame, and suggested that we settle the whole matter."

"He's made a virtue of necessity," said Eustace, grimly. "With logs in his mill, at this very moment, with our marks on them, he couldn't very well do otherwise."

"He said he didn't suppose we'd ever miss the few he'd taken," continued Merrill. "In fact, he pretended to be considerably surprised, that a big company like ours would take any notice of so trifling a matter. The gall of the fellow is something amazing."

"He's certainly a bad one, Steve," declared Eustace, with conviction. "You'll have to watch him every minute."

"Oh, I'll do that, all right," said Merrill. "I know he's a mighty treacherous proposition. I've even taken the precaution to send a man ahead to Grindstone to swear out a warrant for him, although I don't anticipate that there will be any need of serving it."

"That's a good idea," said Eustace, approvingly.

"There's another thing to be considered," continued Merrill. "That mill and the teams there are practically in our hands now. We shall have to put a caretaker there for two or three days, until I get back from Bangor. By that time I shall have some idea what to do with them. I hate to take a man off the drive now, for I am anxious to get it into Greenbush at the earliest possible day."

"How would Norman Carver and Fred Warner do?" suggested Eustace.

"Just the idea!" exclaimed Merrill, with enthusiasm. "Let them take three days' provisions and go over there. At the end of that time I'll plan to relieve them. And now let's get some signed statements out of those men."

"There's one thing to be considered," said Eustace. "If you let these men go, there's nothing to prevent them from going back to the mill and making matters uncomfortable for the boys."

"That's so," admitted Merrill. "I suppose they all have their dunnage in the camp there. They'll have to go back and get it. I don't think they'll be looking for trouble, though, after I've read them the riot act. I guess they'll be glad to go back and get their stuff and clear out. At any rate, I'll try and make it clear to them that such a course will be most decidedly best for their health."

"All the same, I think I'd better let Sol go with

them to-day," said Eustace. "He can stay with them to-night, and go back on the drive in the morning."

"That's a good idea," agreed Merrill. "I'll tell every one of those fellows that if he wants to keep out of jail, he'll have to get his duds and clear out before two o'clock this afternoon. That will clear the deck, and give the boys plain sailing."

For the next hour or two Merrill and Eustace were busy with the men of Crowley's crew, who, with the prospect of escaping jail, were entirely willing to make the signed statements required of them, and to agree to leave that region at once.

While this work was in progress, Sol Soc, Norman, and Fred Warner, armed with Winchester rifles, and carrying a good supply of provisions, were on the way down the river to take charge of Crowley's mill and camp. Arriving at the mouth of the brook upon which they were situated, they took their way up the path that ran beside it. The little stream was pretty well filled with a string of logs, bearing the various marks of the different concerns that made up the East Branch Log Driving Company. Sol examined the tracks along the brook with interest, and an air of deep disgust.

"Tellum whole story," he grunted.

"Of course they do, Sol — to you," admitted Norman; "but you know the most of us can read a book a good deal better than we can tracks."

"Dat ben big book," declared the Indian, pointing to the medley of tracks upon the sand-bank.

"Yes," conceded Norman, with a laugh; "that was plain enough for Fred to read — in part, at least."

Sol gave him a commiserating look.

"You learn heap things byumby," he said.

"I think I'd pick them up fast, Sol, if I had you for a teacher," responded Norman.

"I gass so," said Sol, well pleased at the compliment.

"You see now why we didn't catch but one fish here yesterday," said Fred. "Those fellows didn't have much of anything to do days, but fish. As a result, they had the trout pretty well cleared out of this brook."

"Come back lill time," said Sol.

"You mean that they will run up the brook from the East Branch?" questioned Norman.

"Ya-as."

"I reckon it will take a week or two for a new trout population to find all the good holes," said Fred.

"Com' in fas'," asserted Sol. "Me know good place for fish on East Branch."

"I hope it isn't very far off," remarked Norman.

"Ah, no; mebbe pretty near," suggested Sol, mysteriously.

"I think I could do quite a good turn at cooking trout, if they came my way," said Warner.

"You haveum," was the Indian's laconic answer.

"That means business," laughed Norman. "You must remember, Fred, that Sol's word is fully as good as his bond."

For a time they walked along in silence, the boys absorbed in their own reflections, falling naturally into the taciturn mood of the Indian.

Presently they crossed the log at the foot of the dam, and slowly climbed the well-worn road that led up the incline to the little mill clearing, on the further side of which, half screened by a fringe of cedars, the boys perceived for the first time a log camp and horse hovel.

"No seeum before?" questioned Sol, noting their evident surprise.

"No," confessed Norman. "We were looking at the mill when we came into this clearing yesterday. Before we had time to look at anything else, Jabe Crowley butted in and filled the whole landscape."

"He was about all one pair of eyes could take in," corroborated Warner. "He absorbed our whole attention."

"Me wish me ben dere," sighed the Indian, regretfully.

Warner indulged a low chuckle.

"I believe you expressed the same wish yesterday," he said, turning to Norman. "You thought matters might have been more interesting for Crowley under those circumstances."

"I haven't any doubt but that they would," declared Norman; "although that ducking Crowley got was certainly entertaining — to us."

"Me giveum big licking," said the Indian, confidently.

"I guess it was just as well you were not here," laughed Warner. "You would probably have put a dent in Crowley's beauty; but the chances are that a number of his men were in and around the camp here. Of course they would have come to his assistance."

"Me lickum whole crowd," declared Sol, boastfully.

"I've no doubt you'd have made them go some," agreed Norman, diplomatically.

Crossing the clearing, they entered the small log camp, which had been the home of Crowley and his men. It was the usual type of structure used by loggers in that section, having a big box stove in the center, and a double row of bunks, one above the other, extending the entire length of one side. There was no dingle, the cook's quarters, a shed-roofed room, being built against the further end of the main camp. The effects of the men were in the camp, just as they had been left the previous evening.

"My! but isn't this a filthy place!" exclaimed Norman, as he surveyed the floor coated with tobacco-juice, and the torn and dirty blankets that covered the bunks.

"I don't think it would win a gold medal from the State Board of Health," agreed Warner.

"Takeum all day, cleanum out dirt," added Sol.

"There will have to be a few cartloads removed before I am willing to keep house here," declared Norman. "We'd better look after the horses, and get back here to work," he continued, as he led the way out-of-doors.

CHAPTER XXX

NORMAN AND FRED KEEP VIGIL

"Now for the horses!" exclaimed Warner, as he led the way to the hovel, which stood a short distance from the camp.

A whinny of delight came from the big Percherons housed within, as Sol opened the door to the rude stable. There were four of them — a span of bays, and one of blacks. They were powerful animals, weighing more than fifteen hundred pounds apiece; and there was an eager welcome for Sol and the boys in their large, intelligent eyes.

"I don't think our boys stopped to feed them last night," said Warner. "They merely tied them up and left them."

"Mebbe throwum in lill hay," suggested Sol.

"If they did, it has been pretty well cleaned up," declared Norman, with a glance at the empty cribs.

"Wantum water," declared Sol, looking them over with a critical eye.

Acting upon this suggestion, the horses were backed out of their stalls, and led down to the mill-pond, where they speedily demonstrated the truth of Sol's assertion.

"Ugh! Good job!" grunted the Indian, when the

big horses had been returned to their stalls and supplied with a generous feed of hay and oats.

"And now I reckon we'd better tackle the camp," said Warner. "I suppose the first thing to do will be to carry out the old boughs that are in the bunks."

All three took hold with a will, and at the end of an hour the dry boughs that had formed the camp beds were blazing brightly in a big bonfire on the shore of the mill-pond. Presently the men of Crowley's crew began to put in an appearance, to claim their effects. As each one took his departure he was offered his choice of the blankets; with the result that, by noon, only three or four remained. And these were promptly taken down to the shore of the mill-pond, and burned.

"Only three extenders and a grain-bag left!" exclaimed Norman, at 12 o'clock, with a glance at the dunnage still hanging upon the wooden pegs in the camp ribs. "We've certainly made good progress."

"I imagine those belong to the men who got away," said Warner. "I don't believe they will come after them. Barney O'Connor was probably right when he expressed the opinion that they wouldn't stop running until they reached the Canada line."

"Time getum dinner," announced Sol, as he proceeded to build a fire in the cook-stove.

"Right you are, Sol," agreed Warner. "We've been so busy that I didn't realize it was getting so late. We wasted our strength when we toted our provisons along," he added, with a glance around the kitchen.

"We at least have the satisfaction of knowing that ours are clean," declared Norman.

"That's so," assented Warner. "Still, you must admit that this room isn't at all bad. It's very evident that their cook was a good deal neater than the rest of them. Here are potatoes, and turnips, pork, beans, flour, Indian meal, salt, sugar, cream o' tartar, baking-powder, prunes, tea, lard, oleomargarine, Canada peas, and a side of bacon — in fact, about everything that is necessary to begin housekeeping. Where do they get their drinking-water?"

"Good spring 'bove mill," said Sol.

"All right. Just fill up those two big pails."

"What shall I do?" asked Norman. "I'm the cookee, you know."

"Well, you may lug in a little more wood," said Fred. "I see plainly that Sol is in a starving condition, so I shall have to hurry things along."

A little later they sat down to a hearty dinner, and Norman and Sol were quite ready to concede that Fred had done full credit to the capable instruction of Felix Lamarre. There were baked potatoes, hot biscuit, fried bacon, and a big pot of steaming tea.

"I'm going to fry some doughnuts, stew some prunes, make up some bread, and bake a pot of beans this afternoon," declared Warner, as he poured the tea for Norman and Sol. "You two will have to finish the men's camp without me."

"We sha'n't have any trouble doing that, with the

good start we've got," returned Norman. "We shall be glad to spare time to carry out that interesting programme, sha'n't we, Sol?"

"Ugh! ya-as," assented the Indian.

"He's really a good deal more enthusiastic about it than he cares to let you know, Fred," explained Norman.

When the meal was finished, Fred shut himself into the kitchen while Norman and Sol resumed their work in the men's camp, which, by dint of much sweeping and scrubbing, they succeeded in getting into a fairly cleanly condition by the close of the afternoon.

"It seems an awful waste of labor, Sol, for the short time we are likely to stay here," said Norman, surveying the results of their work with keen satisfaction; "but, you know, I simply couldn't sleep in a place as dirty as this was this morning."

"Getum boughs?" asked the Indian.

"Yes. We might as well finish up while we are about it. I don't suppose it will be necessary to bough out any more of the bunk than we shall need for our own beds. I reckon we'd better take the upper one. The air will be better up there."

By six o'clock a considerable section of the upper bunk was filled with freshly cut boughs, carefully laid with their cut ends at the bottom. Over these were spread the clean blankets they had brought with them; and, with the pungent, aromatic odors of the balsam fir filling the room, and with the musty atmosphere of

the camp removed by the thorough cleaning and airing out it had received, Norman felt that he would have no difficulty in securing a good night's rest.

They brought excellent appetites to the good supper that Fred had provided for them, which consisted of tea, biscuits, freshly fried doughnuts, prune sauce, and a tin of hot johnny-bread. It is needless to say that they gratified Fred by doing ample justice to his cooking.

After the supper dishes had been cleared away they sat on the deacon seat for a short time, discussing the exciting events of the past few days; and then, after watering and feeding the horses, retired for the night.

Warner, from force of habit, was up before daylight; and, when Norman and Sol had completed their morning toilets, had a good hot breakfast awaiting them — a pot of freshly baked beans, nicely browned, and simmering in pork fat, furnishing the principal part of the repast.

"Do you know," declared Norman, as he passed his plate for a second helping, "I think we have to have a woods atmosphere, to fully appreciate the baked beans of the camp. I had our cook bake some by Lamarre's rule when I was home, but somehow they didn't taste the same."

"You probably didn't go at them with a woods appetite," said Warner.

"No. I don't think I did," admitted Norman; "but I'd no idea it would make such a difference."

"Woods, she big medicine," asserted Sol, gravely.

"That's true," agreed Norman; "but one has to live there a while to find it out."

When they had finished breakfast Sol took his departure, the boys parting with him regretfully. Although he was not a great talker, they recognized in him a fearless and loyal friend.

"Rear dribe go by here to-day," said the Indian, as he was leaving. "You want me, fire two shot — twice off. Mebbe me come."

"All right," said Norman. "We'll keep that in mind. You'd better plan to come up and stop with us to-night, anyway."

"Mebbe me come," responded Sol, as he took his way across the clearing towards the East Branch.

After he had gone, Norman took care of the horses, and lugged the wood and water, while Fred was washing up the dishes. After these tasks, the boys sat, for a time, on a big log by the mill-pond, talking over the experiences that had befallen them on the drive now rapidly drawing to a close. It was a novel experience for them to find time hanging heavily upon their hands.

"I really don't know what to do with myself," declared Warner, with a yawn.

"Let's get our rifles and try shooting at a mark," suggested Norman. "The one I have belongs to Steve Merrill, and I've never had a chance to try it."

"That's a good idea," agreed Warner.

Together they returned and entered the camp.

"I think it would be a good idea to give these a thorough cleaning before we do any shooting with them," declared Warner, as they took their rifles from the corner of the cook-room, and started to leave the camp.

"But it will take a lot of time," objected Norman.

"Yes; and we have it to burn," laughed Warner. "I never had any surplus before, and I don't know what to do with it."

"I tell you what," said Norman. "Let's have our shooting-match, and then clean our rifles. In that way we shall be able to make one bite of the cherry. If we clean them now, we shall have to do it all over again after we get through using them."

"Great head!" exclaimed Warner, with a laugh. "I yield to your superior wisdom."

The boys left the camp and started across the clearing, but suddenly stopped short with astonishment. The hovel door was open, and in front of it a man was holding one of the big black horses by the bridle. Before they could find their voices, a second man emerged from the hovel, leading another horse.

"Hold on, there!" shouted Norman.

"Stop right where you are!" commanded Warner.

The first of the two men — a tall, wiry, dark-complexioned fellow — turned toward them with a scowling face. His companion, short, thick-set, and also of swarthy skin, stopped short, with his horse half-way through the hovel door.

"W'at yo' ban say?" asked the tall man, coolly.

"I said you could hold right up where you are," responded Norman, sharply. "What do you think you're going to do with those horses?"

"Dey ban ma hoss," was the imperturbable answer. "I t'ink I was tak' heem home."

"They're not your horses," declared Norman, "and, what's more, you're not going to take them home. The men all said that they were Crowley's horses; and, whether they are or not, they are in our keeping, and are going to stay here until some one with authority from the Log Driving Company comes after them."

"Yo' mak' me for laugh mase'f on ma face. Yo' t'ink yo' wan ver' beeg fellaire," responded the tall Frenchman, insolently. "Dis hoss ban mine. Ba cripe, I tak' heem. Yo' not so beeg for mak' me be scare!"

"I don't care whether you are scared or not," rejoined Norman, resolutely. "You are not going to take those horses. You may lead them right back into the hovel, and tie them up in the stalls where you found them."

"And you'd better be quick about it," added Warner.

"W'at yo' do, mebbe I don' do eet?" demanded the tall Frenchman, coolly.

"If you don't, I'll bore a hole in you just as sure as you're standing there," declared Norman, hotly.

"It's a short shift for a horse-thief," added Warner.

"I tal yo' dem hoss ban mine," expostulated the Frenchman.

"I tell you they're not yours," replied Norman; "and if you want to get out of here with a whole skin, you'll do as I tell you."

The Frenchmen stood still, with an evident purpose to argue the matter; but Norman cut them short.

"Cover that fellow by the door, Fred," he said; "and if he doesn't return that horse at once, shoot him. I'll take care of the other fellow," he added, as he drew a bead upon the leader.

"Hol' on! Hol' on!" cried the shorter of the two men. "Don' yo' go for shoot on me. I tak' heem back prattee queeck," and he began backing his horse into the hovel.

"Stop yo'se'f rat dere," said the taller of the two men, angrily. "I tal yo' he ban talk heem on top hees hat. He pass us de hot air."

Even as he spoke, Norman fired; and the sharp sing of a bullet caused the tall Frenchman to jump high into the air in sudden terror. When he struck the ground, his assurance had completely left him. He was white and trembling, and his surrender was prompt and abject.

"Don' shoot! Don' shoot! I do w'at yo' say," he shouted, in quavering tones. It was evident that he was thoroughly frightened.

"Take that horse back and tie him up where you found him," repeated Norman, sternly; and his order was obeyed with alacrity.

Norman and Fred followed him up to the hovel door, only to find that the horses were standing untied

in their stalls, while both Frenchmen had disappeared. It was evident that they had improved the brief time afforded them to climb out of the small hovel window back of the further stall, and make good their escape.

"That short fellow went first," declared Warner. "It must have been a tight squeeze for him. When the tall fellow came in and found himself alone, he was more than rattled, and didn't lose any time in following suit. He must have gone through that window head first, like a Jack out of a box. Didn't have time to go any other way."

"Fred," announced Norman, in deep disgust, "we're a pair of lunkheads. The only thing that saved us was the fact that we were dealing with a couple of bigger ones. Just think of our going down on the mill shore, and leaving our rifles at the camp!"

"It was certainly short-sighted in us," admitted Warner, a little sheepishly.

"Those fellows didn't see us down on the shore," continued Norman. "They probably took a peek into the men's camp, saw that there was no one there, and immediately hustled out to get their horses. If they had looked into the cook's camp, they would have discovered our rifles. It would then have been a very easy matter for them to have taken possession of them, and had us completely at their mercy. Under the circumstances, I think we got out of the matter very well."

"It's funny that they didn't hear us when we went back to the camp," remarked Warner.

"They would, if they hadn't both been in the hovel," declared Norman.

"I'm not quite certain that we're out of this scrape yet," said Warner. "They're likely to come back after dark and try it again. Perhaps they'll come armed and bring reinforcements."

"I hardly think so," said Norman; "but there is one thing certain: they'll never get those horses without a fight. You and I will have to take turns guarding that hovel to-night. I think it would be a good idea to water and feed the horses before dark, and then nail up the hovel door. I don't imagine any one would come provided with a claw-hammer; and it would bother them a little to get in."

"Perhaps Sol will be with us to-night to help us out," suggested Warner, hopefully.

The Indian, however, failed to put in an appearance, and the boys took turns guarding the hovel through the rest of the day and the long, tedious hours of the night.

The greater part of the following day was passed in taking care of the horses and making up lost sleep, one of them being constantly on guard. The life which had promised to be so easy, at the start, had suddenly become of the most strenuous character.

The third night in the camp found them decidedly weary of their long watch, but determined to keep it up with unceasing vigilance. About nine o'clock Norman, who was standing guard, suddenly detected the

forms of three men who were making their way across the clearing in the darkness.

"Halt!" he shouted. "Stop right there!"

"All right. Anything t' please ye," said a familiar voice.

"Tom Boggs!" exclaimed Norman, joyfully, hurrying forward to meet them. "And Sol and Jud Skinner!" he added, as he recognized the other two men. "Come into the camp. I'm mighty glad to see you."

"I had some doubts 'bout it, th' way ye hung us up there," laughed Skinner.

"Good boy. Keepum eyes open," said Sol, approvingly.

A hearty welcome awaited the party from Fred Warner, when they entered the camp.

"Jud Skinner, as I'm alive!" he exclaimed. "We thought we'd lost you."

"I've been workin' a crew o' men ahead o' the drive," explained Skinner. "I reckon I've saved the company a few jams, by headin' of 'em off. I heard ye'd got back, an' I'm right glad t' see ye agin, boys."

The newcomers relieved Norman and Fred of the task of watching the hovel that night, and afforded them an opportunity of enjoying their sound sleep without interruption.

CHAPTER XXXI

CONCLUSION

"Steve Merrill sent Jud an' me in here to board in the ends o' th' mill an' take out th' hosses," explained Tom Boggs to Norman and Fred, the following morning.

"Well, I suppose that means that Fred and I are going back to the crew," said Norman.

"Yes," replied Boggs; "I guess Steve was a-plannin' on ye comin' back this mornin' with Sol."

"I suppose the company owns both the mill and the horses now," remarked Warner.

"I reckon thet's 'bout th' size on it," replied Skinner. "Ye see, Crowley was willin' t' do 'most anything t' settle matters up — an' I notice thet Steve spoke 's if he owned things here, when he got back from Bangor. He says he's a-goin' t' move th' mill soon es snow flies."

"'Twould be a little tough t' try t' move it on bare ground in th' present condition o' th' roads hereabouts," interposed Boggs.

"I've noticed a scurcity of ottymobuls 'round here," said Skinner, dryly.

Breakfast was soon over, and the boys took their

leave of Boggs and Skinner. They appreciated the fact that the drive, so far as they were concerned, would soon be over, and that they might never see the good-hearted fellows again. There was real feeling in the cordial good wishes expressed at parting; and the boys could not help feeling a little depressed, as they followed Sol down the bank of the brook and over the log bridge, on their return to the big driving-camp.

They found that the East Branch rear drive had passed the mouth of the brook during their absence, and was several miles down the river. Here Felix Lamarre had established his wangan and was busily at work with his cooking, still using of necessity open fires and Dutch ovens, although the sweltering mid-summer weather made these primitive methods exceedingly uncomfortable.

The boys were given a cordial welcome back by Merrill and Eustace, who were urging on the men with their customary vigor. The long weeks of hard service had already worked their transformation upon the men of the crew. Long-haired, gaunt, hollow-eyed, and sore-footed, they still pushed on their work with dogged tenacity and dauntless daring. They were ragged and unkempt; their faces tanned to a leathery hue from constant exposure to wind and sun, and covered with stubbly growths of beard. The water oozed from the slits they had cut in their spike-sole shoes, and they slept at night with wet feet.

So far as Eustace and the boys were concerned, the

drive would end at Grindstone, where the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad crossed the East Branch. Some of the men also were planning to leave the crew at this point; while the others would keep on until the drive was landed in the big booms at Greenbush, a short distance above Old Town on the main river.

The day that they reached Grindstone they were paid off and said good-by to Steve Merrill and the members of the crew, who parted with them with very evident regret. Even Sol Soc, whose home was in Old Town and who was therefore booked to go the whole distance, could not prevent a show of feeling from breaking through his barrier of stoicism when he shook Norman's hand at parting.

"Me no forgetum," he said, with very evident feeling; and, turning abruptly, he stalked away to join the men of the crew.

"He didn't want you to see how badly he felt," explained Eustace.

"I know it," said Norman, with tears in his eyes. "What a loyal fellow he is, and how much I owe him!"

A little later in the day, at Grindstone station, he took his leave of Eustace and Fred, who went up the line on their way home.

"I shall certainly see you both again," he said, as he shook their hands at parting. "Fred and I are going to have a hunting trip next fall, and we shall insist on having you with us, Billy."

"If I ever take a vacation, it will be at that time," promised Eustace.

When they were gone, Norman felt depressed and disconsolate; but as he whirled along in the train soon after, on his way to Bangor, where he was to take the boat for Boston, thoughts of home put him in a more cheerful frame of mind. He fully determined, however, to come to Maine the following fall for a hunting trip, and, if possible, bring his father with him. This plan was carried out in due time; but the experiences of that trip will be told in a future volume, entitled: THE YOUNG GUIDE, OR, TWO LIVE BOYS IN THE MAINE WOODS.

Raymond Benson Series

By CLARENCE B. BURLEIGH

Illustrated by L. J. Bridgman **Large 12mo, Cloth**

$1.50 per volume

The Camp on Letter K

THE story deals with two active boys in Aroostook County close to the northeastern boundary of our country, and where smuggling across the Canadian line has been prevalent. Equally ready in athletics, hunting, or helping their families on the rich farms of that section, these good chums have many exciting adventures, the most important of which directly concerns the leading smugglers of the district, and an important public service is rendered by the boys.

"There is an atmosphere about the whole book that is attractive to boys, and it will be read by them with enthusiastic delight."—*Democrat and Chronicle, Rochester, N. Y.*

Raymond Benson at Krampton

RAYMOND BENSON and his friend, Ned Grover, go to Krampton Academy, which is no other than the noted school at New Hampton, N. H., where Mr. Burleigh was fitted for college. We have had good books telling of the larger and more aristocratic preparatory schools, but never before one that so well told of life at a typical country academy of the sort that have furnished the inspiration for so many successful men.

"It is interesting from start to finish, and while rousing and full of enthusiasm, is wholesome in spirit, and teaches lessons of purity and justice and manliness in real life."—*Herald & Presbyter.*

The Kenton Pines

"KENTON COLLEGE" is Bowdoin College, beautiful in its location and famous in its history. Raymond's athletic abilities insure him immediate and enduring prominence as a student, and the accounts of athletic contests will stir the blood of any one. But the book is far more than a tale of these things; it is a wonderful picture of life at a smaller college, with all its fine hard work, "grinds," and triumphs. It is a book that rings true on every manly question.

"This book, like the other of the series, is of a very high character, and should be an inspiration to all boys contemplating a college career."—*Interior.*

For sale at all booksellers or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

Making of Our Nation Series

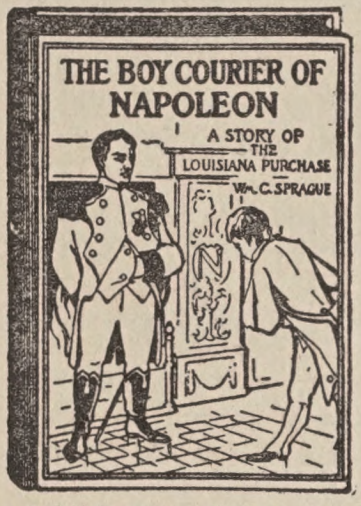
By WILLIAM C. SPRAGUE

Large 12mo, Cloth Illustrated by A. B. Shute

Price per volume, $1.50

The Boy Courier of Napoleon

A Story of the Louisiana Purchase



WILLIAM C. SPRAGUE, the notably successful editor of "The American Boy," has given for the first time the history of the Louisiana Purchase in entertaining story form. The hero is introduced as a French drummer boy in the great battle of Hohenlinden. He serves as a valet to Napoleon and later is sent with secret messages to the French in San Domingo and in Louisiana. After exciting adventures he accomplishes his mission and is present at the lowering of the Spanish flag, and later at that of the French and the raising of the Stars and Stripes.

"All boys and girls of our country who read this book will be delighted with it, as well as benefited by the historical knowledge contained in its pages."—*Louisville, Ky., Times.*

"An excellent book for boys, containing just enough history to make them hunger for more. No praise of this book can be too high."—*Town Topics, Cleveland, O.*

"This book is one to fascinate every intelligent American boy."—*Buffalo Times.*

The Boy Pathfinder

A Story of the Oregon Trail

THIS book has as its hero an actual character, George Shannon, a Pennsylvania lad, who at seventeen left school to become one of the Lewis and Clark expedition. He had narrow escapes, but persevered, and the story of his wanderings, interwoven with excellent historical information, makes the highest type of general reading for the young.

"It is a thoroughly good story, full of action and adventure and at the same time carrying a bit of real history accurately recorded."—*Universalist Leader, Boston.*

"It is an excellent book for a boy to read."—*Newark, N. J., Advertiser.*

For sale by all booksellers or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

TWO YOUNG INVENTORS

THE STORY OF THE FLYING BOAT

By ALVAH MILTON KERR Illustrated $1.25

HERE is a rattling good story; a tale of mystery, mechanism, and getting on in the world that will be a boy's favorite for years. Two youths, both born inventors, make each other's acquaintance as a result of misfortunes attending a Minnesota cyclone. Their efforts to perfect a flying-boat that shall not only skim the water, but rise into the air, result in the securing of a mechanical education. Mr. Kerr has solved the problem of a book that shall be intensely exciting and yet thoroughly wholesome.

"The ingenuity and pluck of these two worthy heroes supply just the right material for the encouragement of ambitious youth." — *Boston Beacon.*

"The book is full of life, incident, and stirring success." — *Watchman, Boston.*

"The book is deeply interesting, at times intensely exciting, and yet thoroughly clean and wholesome throughout." — *Portland Express.*

YOUNG HEROES OF WIRE AND RAIL

By ALVAH MILTON KERR Illustrated 12mo Cloth $1.25

THE place which the sea once held in supplying thrilling tales of heroism and peril is now being largely usurped by that powerful agent of progress, the railway service, and with no lessening of interest. It is also very attractive to know how those who bear the vast responsibilities of this service perform their work and meet the fearful emergencies that may arise at any time.

"The tone of the work is healthful and inspiring." — *Boston Herald.*

"They are calculated to inspire boys to become manly, and incidentally they contain considerable valuable information." — *Newark News.*

"An ideal book for a young boy is 'Young Heroes of Wire and Rail.'" — *Episcopal Recorder, Philadelphia.*

For sale by all booksellers or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

PIGEON CAMP SERIES

By MARTHA JAMES

Illustrated Cloth Large 12mo **$1.25** per volume

Jimmie Suter

JIMMIE SUTER is a sturdy, active, honest boy, whose parents are in moderate circumstances. What Jimmie lacks in pocket money, however, he more than makes up in mechanical ingenuity and other good qualities, and his best boy friend is the son of a rich man. They have royal times making and sailing an ice-boat and doing many other things, and best of all they organize the "S. F. B.," or Society for Feeding Birds, which spreads far and wide and is productive of much good.

"In his kindness and thoughtfulness for both men and animals Jimmie is an ideal boy."—*The Watchman, Boston.*

The Boys of Pigeon Camp

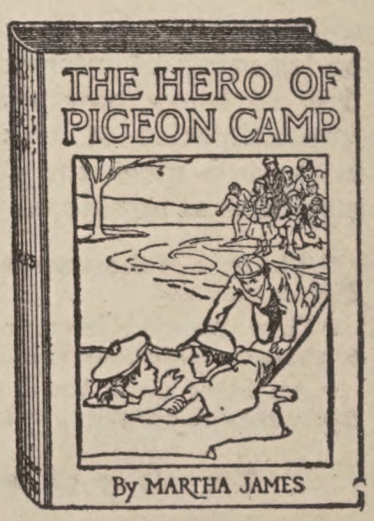
JIMMIE SUTER, with his mechanical skill, Rand Cotter, son of a rich father, but not the least bit of a snob, Philip Moon, always kind to birds and animals, and a boy-stranger, "Lucci," whom they befriend, have the jolliest kind of a time camping in a fine tent on the shore of a lake in the town where Jimmie lives. Prizes are offered by the editor of a boys' paper, for certain work, and the comrades secure four of these.

"This is a story of out-door life that will be fascinating to any boy."—*Philadelphia Inquirer.*

The Hero of Pigeon Camp

FOUR bright young schoolboys have a camp through the summer vacation on the shore of a fine lake, incidentally caring for the premises of an eccentric old man, absent on a long journey. One of the four, "Lucci," has been a waif, though well-born and of great artistic ability. He repays the kindness of his young friends by affectionate companionship, and proves himself a real hero when occasion comes.

"Good, wholesome reading for boys and girls who are wide awake and want to learn things and do things with good times all along the way."—*Universalist Leader.*



For sale by all booksellers or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

LBJL'15

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

00021218467